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Dungeons & Dragons

THE SAVAGE TIDE REACHES THE ISLE OF DREAD!

Dungeon®

ISSUE 142 · JANUARY 2007

RETURN TO THE LOST CITY

RAID THE VAULT OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

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DarcKnyght

ALL-NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ADVENTURES FEATURING:

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THE ISLE OF DREAD › DOWNER › MT. ZOGON

ISSUE #142 JANUARY 2007 VOLUME 21, NO 1

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Jason Bulmahn
Shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread! Faced with a dangerous journey, the PCs must escort a ragged band of castaways through monster-infested wildlands in order to reach the safety promised by the colony of Farshore on the isle's southern tip. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 7th-level characters.

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ON THE COVER

James Ryman revisits one of D&D's classic dungeons, the mysterious Lost City of Cynidicea, in this month's cover, featuring a dangerous and mysterious cultist of the horned god Zargon.

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"When I drew nigh the nameless city I knew it was accursed. I was traveling in a parched and terrible valley under the moon, and afar I saw it protruding uncannily above the sands as parts of a corpse may protrude from an ill-made grave. Fear spoke from the age-worn stones of this hoary survivor of the deluge, this great-grandfather of the eldest pyramid; and a viewless aura repelled me and bade me retreat from antique and sinister secrets that no man should see, and no man else had dared to see."

H. P. Lovecraft
"The Nameless City"

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 2/28/07.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:
Masque of Dreams (142MD1DN)
Here There Be Monsters (142HM1DN)
Bright Mountain King (142BK1DN)

RULES FOR RULES LAWYERS

Hi, my name is Jeremy, and I'm a rules lawyer. I wasn't always an insufferable know-it-all that delights in ruining the game for everyone, just so he can demonstrate his superior geek-fu (come on, I know that's what you're thinking). No, I had to work long and hard at it. When I first started working on *Dungeon*, I was as innocent as the next guy, so when Erik told me, "I need you to become an expert on 3.5 D&D," I studied the game enthusiastically. It wasn't until I saw the expression on his face the first time I corrected him on a ruling during his D&D game that I considered that I might have done my job too well.

Nevertheless, I couldn't unlearn it. I had discovered a passion for the rules that I suspect many people share. One of the hallmarks of 3.5 is its varied game mechanics that incorporate just about everything anyone might want to do, in combat or out of it. Although the game has many flaws, I love the precision, the elegance, and (yes) the complexity of the design. I find it difficult to just stand there and allow the game I play to be butchered by ignorance and misunderstanding. Of course, I have also learned that other people (especially DMs) don't really see it that way.

Since my first run in with Erik I have learned a few things about myself, my DMs, and the game. Here are a few tips for other rules lawyers.

Be honest. This is important for any D&D player, of course, but especially for a rules lawyer. If people don't trust you, they won't listen to you. Not only will they break the rules, they probably won't put up with you for very long.

Be fair. There are players out there who consider it their duty to undermine the DM by pointing out his rules mistakes while ignoring the errors of their fellow players, thinking this will give the party some kind of advantage. This is foolish for two reasons: First, if the game devolves into a contest between the DM and the players, everyone loses and second, being a rules lawyer is not about winning, it's about fair play. And as much as your fellow players may ostracize you for pointing out a mistake in their favor, in the long run, everyone will enjoy the game more if they know everyone is following the rules.

Don't let the rules spoil the game. As much as I like the D&D rules, it's important to recognize that they are at times ambiguous, incomplete, and flawed. It's the DM's job to pick up where the rules leave off, to turn the collection of races, classes, feats, skills, monsters, and characters into a world that's both consistent and lifelike. Sometimes, he'll disagree with you about how a rule really works. Sometimes, he'll decide the rule is silly and do his own thing. And sometimes he'll be completely unreasonable. During these times it's important to realize that the game is more important than the rules, and trying to argue your case will only make things worse. After all, D&D is not a courtroom. It's not about being right or wrong, or even winning and losing. In the grip of righteous fury, it's easy to overlook the fact that in D&D, the game is bigger than the rules.

And for the DMs out there that have to deal with us, try not to see us as your enemy. It can be incredibly frustrating to be contradicted in your own game, but if you view the rules lawyer as a resource to be exploited rather than a foe to be subverted, he can be a great asset to your game.

Jeremy Walker
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Tell us what you think of this issue.

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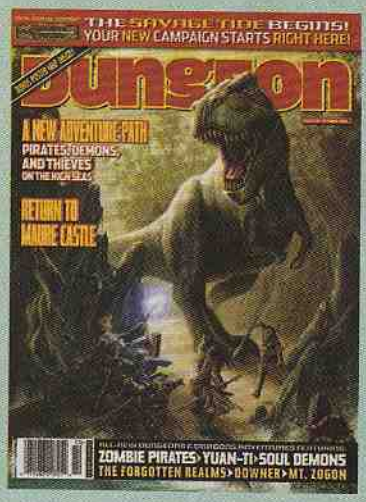
DUNGEON #139


THE SAVAGE TIDE BEGINS!
YOUR NEW CAMPAIGN STARTS RIGHT HERE!
Dungeon
A NEW ADVENTURE PATH
PIRATES, DEMONS, AND THIEVES ON THE HIGH SEAS
RETURN TO MAURE CASTLE
ZOMBIE PIRATES • YUAN-TI • SOUL DEMONS
THE FORGOTTEN REALMS • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Fans of the classic adventure "The Isle of Dread" may have felt a sense of deja-vu when they saw the cover of *Dungeon* #139. This classic "dinosaur vs. adventurers" scene graced the cover of that adventure back in the very early 80's, and since the isle plays such a huge role in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, it seemed an obvious theme for the cover to the issue containing "There Is No Honor," the first adventure in our third adventure path. This issue also featured a backdrop article on the city of Sasserine and a four-panel poster map to match.

The nostalgia continued to flow in Robert J. Kuntz's third installment of our ongoing "Maure Castle" series. This time, we descended into the "Greater Halls" of the castle dungeons, a region dominated by the remants of an undead army, minions of a demon queen, and a magical clone of one of the Maures themselves!

Also featured in this issue was a journey into the Forgotten Realms—Anson Caralya's "Requiem of the Shadow Serpent" showed us that not every spellcaster is helpless in a dead-magic zone.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #139 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Savage Maures

First, I would like to state that I have been a proud buyer and reader of *Dungeon* for a little over two years now, and I really do like the adventures that your inspired authors create. I think the Savage Tide Adventure Path is going to be an interesting one considering what I have seen so far and how it is going to end. Demogorgon's demise should hopefully be a little easier then Kyuss, but then again there is a reason they call Demogorgon "The Prince of Demons."

I also really liked the new Maure Castle adventure, "The Greater Halls." I have been throughly enarmored with Maure Castle since you did that super-sized adventure in #112, and if I may be so bold, I'd like to also make a request. My players and I think a few other people would love to have at least one more Maure Castle adventure before the Savage Tide reaches its epic finale. My players love tromping around old Maure Castle and plumbing its dark depths.

Ian Brown
Via Email

While the manuscript for "Prince of Demons" hasn't come in yet, I can guarantee that the final conflict against Demogorgon won't be a cakewalk. As for those tricksy Maures, rest assured that Rob Kuntz will be gracing the pages of Dungeon again with more forays into the depths of Maure Castle. There's a lot of secrets waiting to be revealed in untold sinister chambers yet to be explored!

Moral of the Story

Hey guys! First of all, congratulations to James Jacobs on becoming Editor-in-Chief of *Dungeon*! He's been one of my favorite D&D writers since "Scepter of the Underworld" appeared back in *Dungeon* #12. "Jan Daystar" remains a recurring figure in my campaign world.

Anyway, I just wanted to state the obvious; every great story has a theme. *Beowulf*? The strong deserve to rule. *Lord of the Rings*? Power corrupts, no matter how good-hearted you were in the beginning. *Star Wars*? Pretty much the same thing. Dragonlance? Evil turns upon itself. In the same vein, the most memorable adventures I've played are still with me years afterwards for reasons other than the fun I had playing them. One memorable module was "Journey to the Rock." I no longer recall what class I chose, what monsters I fought, or what the goal of the adventure was except for what the title implied. I do remember, however, that the adventure had a theme that the author took pains to communicate to the players—"All that glitters is not gold," or words to that effect. Yeah, I know it was a platitude even before Plato, but many events and encounters in the adventure reinforced this point, so that by the end of it I had gained a new perspective on this tired cliché.

After reading "There Is No Honor," I noticed that the Savage Tide Adventure Path possesses much theme/moral

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON

RIDING THE RAIL

BY CHRISTOPHER WISSEL

Train rides in Breland are never as relaxing as they should be, especially when the train's being used to transport a monolith hauled from the mysterious depths of Xen'drik. An EBERRON adventure for 5th-level characters.

TIDES OF DREAD

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN

After defending the colony of Farshore from a pirate attack, the PCs learn the assault was but a prelude of things to come. They must prepare the colony for a larger attack, drawing only upon resources available to them on the Isle of Dread. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 9th-level characters.

BACKDROP: FARSHORE

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN

The burgeoning colony of Farshore needs your PCs' help if it's going to survive the perils of the Isle of Dread.

MASK OF DIAMOND TEARS

BY NICOLAS LOGUE

When the PCs are called upon to investigate the theft of a strange artifact called the *Mask of Diamond Tears*, they face a deadly adversary indeed—themselves! A D&D adventure for 13th-level characters.

potential which (if emphasized enough times in future installments) could further tie the 12-part series as a whole and enrich the gaming experience. For example, after considering Vanthus's character I realized that, for some villains, no magically inspired wave of savagery is needed to transform them into diabolical fiends. There is enough selfishness, greed, and hate welling in their hearts to make up for what the Abyss has to offer, if allowed free rein over their lives. D&D adventures may be the last place one would expect to find valuable insights into human nature, but then again... why not? D&D is about good versus evil, among other things, and hasn't lasted this long and had so much influence because of its beautiful game mechanics. No theme, no moral truth, jumps out at me from the Shackled City and Age of Worms Adventure Paths. I doubt any were considered since Adventure Paths weren't attempted by *DUNGEON* before, and attention was focused on other things (come to think of it... the city of Cauldron is what tied the first AP together, while the menace of the Worm God resonated throughout the latter, but these hardly qualify as "morals"). In any case, this is *DUNGEON*'s third AP, and there is no shortage of gifted writers writing for *DUNGEON* with talents limited to vivid read-aloud text and accurate stat blocks. Practice is over, and I expect something "deeper" from you guys this time around. Awesome maps, fantastic illustrations, and creative encounters just won't do it. These serve different functions, are corollary to the adventure, and can never make a good story great. So here's hoping for an overt, central, binding theme that becomes manifest as the adventure path progresses—a moral that will give the DM and players something to ponder long after the dice have been put away.

Rory Sangalang
Toronto, Ontario

We're very consciously including moral themes in the Savage Tide Adventure Path—the observations you've made about Vanthus' character being only one of them. Of course, an RPG campaign is a different beast from a movie or a novel, where the actions of the main characters are controlled by one vision. In an RPG, the players get to make the choices, which makes it difficult to write an adventure that only works if the PCs are of one specific moral bent.

The way the Savage Tide Adventure Path is constructed, it's actually possible for the PCs to play some pretty despicable thieves and cutthroats if they wish, but as each adventure builds on the previous one, it should become obvious to even a party of dread pirates and assassins that there's evil out there that even society's outcasts can strive against. At the same time, there are many encounters in the Savage Tide adventures that should be resolved with diplomacy and negotiation—a party that tries to solve every encounter in this campaign with combat is in for a rough time. This adventure path presents numerous ethical dilemmas for the PCs, but what morals they extract are up to them.

To-Do List

You have mentioned that you don't get many letters, so I thought I'd write you one.

1. First of all, thank you for refusing to ditch this part of the magazine! I don't have regular internet access, so I don't read the message boards much.

2. Second, I like how you put a low-, mid-, and high-level adventure in each issue, but it would be really great if you could try to have one of those involve a bunch of roleplaying, like "The Prince of Redhand" (*DUNGEON* #131). I know you might not get a lot of these type of adventures but D&D is a roleplaying game

I find that as time goes on, DMs just throw monsters at the PCs and call it good. You guys set the example, so set the bar high—just killing monsters doesn't count. You need real roleplaying.

3. For all the DMs like me who prefer (and have time) to write all our own adventures but use stat blocks from the magazine, it would be great if you could group all the stat blocks for each adventure at the back (maybe in an appendix) so I can just flip to the end when I need an NPC or monster on the spot.

4. Some of the ELs in adventures seem a bit too high for the level you specify. For example, "The Coming Storm" is for four tenth-level PCs, but it had fourteen

THIS MONTH IN DRAGON

THE WORLD SERPENT INN

BY WOLFGANG BAUR, ERIC L. BOYD, JAMES LOWDER, ET AL.

Explore the planar enigma of the World Serpent Inn, an ever-changing festhall and flophouse unfettered by reality. This year, the World Serpent Inn revisits several campaign settings, including:

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RAVENLOFT: Reveal the shadowy new darklord of Lord Soth's former realm.

Plus stops in *AL-QADIM*, *DRAGONLANCE*, *PLANESCAPE*, and beyond.

ECOLOGY OF THE ISLE OF DREAD

BY JACOB FAZIER

The Isle of Dread explored! Read the journals of Larissa Vanderboren and retrace her adventures. Includes a free player's poster map of the Isle of Dread!

PLUS!

New monthly *FORGOTTEN REALMS* and *EBERRON* features, Class Acts, Scale Mail, Sage Advice, Savage Tidings, and comics, including "The Order of the Stick."

encounters over EL ten and the PCs are stuck in a hostile area so I don't see how they could rest every four encounters. Can PCs really survive this sort of thing?

5. This one is for Monte Cook—put something in Dungeoncraft about structure. I know it's in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but some people just don't get it. I've seen it all, and there's nothing worse than an adventure with bad structure.

On a good note, way to go on "Sometimes it's just the DM's fault." That was great!

6. I've got to go, but one last thing—I know I'm a bit late on this one but what is the scale on that Greyhawk map you did in *DUNGEON* issues 118 to 121? I had never seen a map of Greyhawk before—I thought each hex might be 5 miles, but that seems way off.

Simon Beckford
Clifton ME

1: No problem.

2: "Swords of Dragonslake" and "The Sea Wyvern's Wake" in DUNGEON #141 and "Mask of Dreams" in this issue should offer plenty to whet anyone's appetite for roleplaying adventures. And trust me... there are plenty more roleplaying adventures to come!

3: We considered placing statblocks at the end of an adventure or the end of the magazine, but in the end decided against it since placing the encounters in the running text reduces page flipping, and large sections of stat blocks make for ugly magazine pages.

4: An adventure's EL mix can certainly vary. In the case of "The Coming Storm," there's no real timeline for the PCs to follow, so they shouldn't try to take out the entire temple in one foray. In addition, since this adventure has 34 encounters, the PCs should certainly have the opportunity to advance in level at some point along the way. And, of course, the average EL of those 34 encounters ends up being 9.8. I'd say "The Coming Storm" is about right on the money.

5: Monte Cook's no longer writing Dungeoncraft. Starting with the next issue, this column is in the able hands of another Planescape-alumnist, Wolfgang Baur. I'll bounce the idea off of him and see what happens.

6: The scale is one hex = 30 miles. It appears on the lower left corner of the lower left map, but we probably should have printed it a bit bigger since not many seem to notice it.

Desperately Seeking Highfolk

I just recently discovered your fine magazine. I am fascinated with what I've found there. Since you have a lot of *GREYHAWK* content, I thought this might be the right place to ask for help. The *GREYHAWK* setting is my D&D setting of choice. I love it. It's just so difficult to find material for this setting.

Do you know if a detailed map of the city of Highfolk exists? For the campaign I'm running, I really need some detailed information about people and places in this city. I've already contacted the RPGA (one of the triads responsible for Highfolk) about this matter, but even they didn't have a map to offer (the capital city of the region they are responsible for!). I found a map of the city as part of the *Player's Guide to Highfolk*. It is quite nice, but it doesn't point out any important or interesting buildings or places. The corresponding text only gives rough information about the four districts of the city in four very short paragraphs. I purchased a copy of *The Marklands* through Ebay, but sadly it doesn't contain a map of the city of Highfolk.

It is so frustrating that information on this setting seems to be discontinued! It would be so nice if Oerth/the Flanaess were detailed as beautifully as the *FORGOTTEN REALMS*. It's a shame, since *GREYHAWK* is the original setting and peeks through every now and then even in the current rulebooks. I already wrote an email about this matter to the Wizards of the Coast customer support. I was told that my inquiry would be passed on to the people responsible. If only something would happen...

Michel Thater
Hamburg, Germany

As luck would have it, the guy who sits in the next cube over from mine is Jason Bulmahn, Managing Editor for DRAGON and ex-triad/circle member for Highfolk. A quick shout over the cube wall confirms your fears—apart from the map you have from the Player's Guide to Highfolk, no map of the city exists. There is a Yahoo! newsgroup called "nl1triad" that's all about Highfolk, so that's probably the best place to go to seek answers.

For Sale! Thousands of Dungeons!

Thank you for years of great content. I've been a happy reader for quite some time now and out of curiosity wondered how many copies do you sell each month? Must be quite a lot since there's quite a few gamers around.

Sven-Ivar Fjeld
Via Email

Every year, we print a statement of ownership in DUNGEON. *As luck would have it, said statement appears in this very issue! I'll save you the trouble of flipping to page 82, though—as of the November 2006 issue of the magazine, we generally sell about 30,000 copies per month to subscribers, distributors, bookstores, and other venues.*

Ye Olde Suggestion Box

Since I moved six months ago it's been excruciatingly hard finding a lasting gaming group, and so to fight the effects of withdrawal I figured I'd drop you a line. I'm interested to see how many readers agree with some of these issues of space use in each issue, as well as the old or new editor.

First, I need the Adventure Backgrounds the way they are. My own personality, schema, and preferences went into my own campaigns every time, thus my gamers knew the flavor of my NPC's and plots like they knew I love Bob Dylan and Metallica. Reading detailed Adventure Backgrounds from other DM's keeps my campaigns less stale and predictable for clever players: "Holy cow, you mean the mastermind villain isn't a lawful evil priest of Asmodeus or Vecna?"

As far as available space—do we really need the Adventure Hooks? Heck, the *Dungeon Master's Guide* lists enough of them. I challenge you to grab a copy of DUNGEON and just read the Adventure Hooks straight through: "Oh, great, I can have Monte, the local high priest, contact the PC cleric or Niles, the guildmaster contact that PC. Or, "Gee the PC's reputation proceeds them—I never thought of that!"

And while we're on the subject of space, is it necessary to mandate an Adventure Synopsis for every adventure? Aren't we all going to read at least the first half of the module anyway to see if we can mongrelize some or all of it? I mean, isn't it only necessary if we aren't going to read anything else? Even in cases like "Urban Decay," where the synopsis has info not yet mentioned, we really don't need it.

Now for the Scaling the Adventure sidebars. Allow me to paraphrase them to a "T." If the PC's are higher level make the villain a little stronger and add more monsters; if the PC's are weaker make the bad guys weaker... If stats are what's required just put, "+2 wizard levels; receives the spells *dimension door*, *orb of electricity*, and *lightning bolt*. Extra feat: Improved Initiative. Magic items: scroll of *minor globe of invulnerability* (2) and *potion of invisibility*. Nine more hit points." That takes up as much space as what you have now. You shouldn't have to come up with weaker stats because they are much easier to do on the fly.

And how about this: Only publish "Downer," "The Portent," and "Mt. Zogon" when their creators submit good stuff. It'll make us appreciate it even more if they are occasionally (or regularly) absent—not to mention happier because they're funny every time and not dumb.

One of the things Erik Mona has said he wants to promote is the familiarity of authors' names to the consumer—as editor, he put the authors' names on the covers, for example. Another way to promote this is to allow certain authors (or adventures) to include an Author's Note after the Adventure Background. For example: "One of the things that always bugs me is that we rarely redo the old classics. It's a shame that so many players have never experienced 'The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb' or 'Ravenloft.'" This would be great for authors such as Perkins, Boyd, Pramas, or Cook. Other, less-known authors, well...

And finally, the magazine is fulfilling and well-appreciated, as are the adventure paths, which are long (maybe too long). Remember "Vampires of Waterdeep"? More adventures that last three or four issues, I feel, would be spectacular.

W. E. Ray
Via Email

Whew! There's a lot to address in your letter, but let me preface it with something I call "Magazine Fact of Publishing #1: Every issue of DUNGEON *is someone's first issue." And then there's "Magazine Fact of Publishing #2: A magazine must speak to a wide audience, if not over the course of a single issue, certainly over the course of a year-long subscription." Everything we print in the magazine has to keep these facts in mind.*

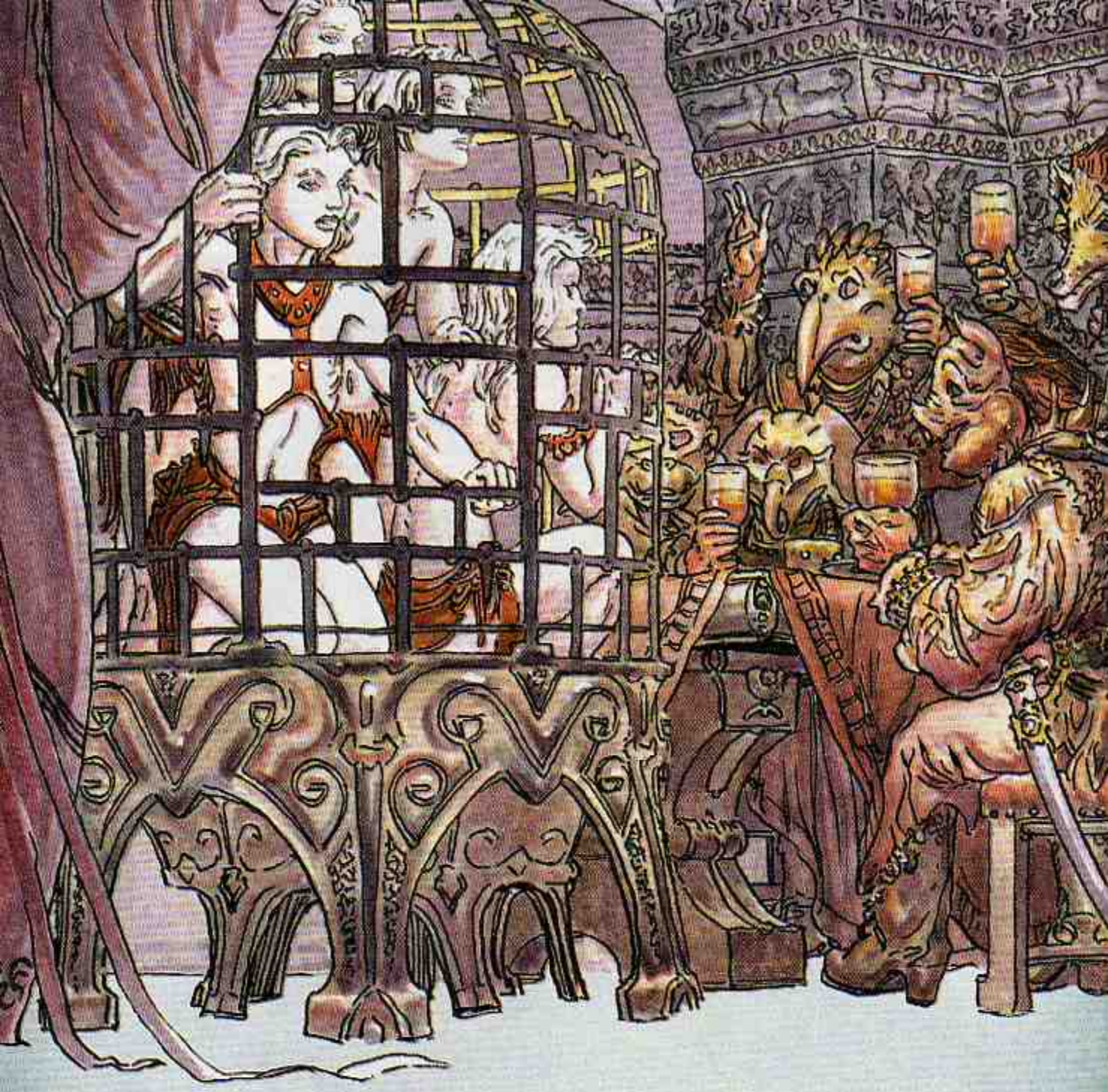
Backgrounds, Hooks, and Synopsises: *All three of these categories serve important needs; they summarize where the adventure's coming from, where it's going, and how to get there. Not everyone has the time to read all three adventures in every issue, and by summarizing each adventure, a DM can quickly and efficiently orient himself with the adventure to come.*

Scaling the Adventure: *After writing and editing well over 100 of these over the past three years, they do start feeling a bit repetitive. But they're certainly not repetitive to the first-time reader. Omitting these sidebars is a disservice to new readers. And for the record, adding actual stat changes in to these sidebars would transform them into full page monstrosities more often than not, so that's certainly not an option.*

"Downer," "Portent," and "Mt. Zogon": *Who's to say what I find funny would make anyone else laugh? These features go a long way to giving* DUNGEON *a personality and remind us, among other things, that humor's as important to the game as anything else. All three add value to the magazine. They're not going away, even if only temporarily, because one didn't happen to be funny to someone.*

Author's Notes: *This is an excellent idea, and it's something I'm considering implementing. The Wizards of the Coast adventure* Red Hand of Doom *did something similar, offering "Designer's Notes" sidebars now and then that gave the reader insights into how and why we did what we did in that adventure's creation. Readers of the adventure responded quite positively to these sidebars. I see no reason to limit these sidebars to the "famous authors." As far as I'm concerned, if you get an adventure published in* DUNGEON, *you know what you're doing and your insights into adventure desing are absolutely worth printing.*

Campaign Arcs: *We'll be starting up a new campaign arc in issue #145, it looks like, so stay tuned!*—James Jacobs



Masque Of Dreams

BY B.MATTHEW CONKLIN III,
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ANY SETTING, LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH), URBAN & WILDERNESS,

Snatched from their underground homes in the lost city of Cynidicea, a frightened group of albinos are scheduled to serve as the main attraction at a noblewoman's gala. Yet even as preparations for the event get under way, priests dedicated to an ancient evil known as Zargon plot to spirit away their stolen kin and their captors, whom they view only as sacrifices. For Zargon hungers.

"Masque of Dreams" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for four 1st-level characters. Though many of the names and themes used here trace their roots back to one of the original D&D campaign settings, the Known World of MYSTARA (as well as Tom Moldvay's classic module *The Lost City*), this adventure is self-contained and can take place in any desert region in any campaign setting.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Centuries ago in a kingdom now buried by the desert sands, the city of Cynidicea looked out over green and fertile lands. Cynidicea reached its apex during the reign of King Alexander and Queen Zenobia, and upon their passing the people erected a pyramid in their honor. Unfortunately, while excavating the tomb's foundation they released a long buried terror, a monstrous being known as Zargon. Once released, the creature could not be stopped, so the Cynidiceans attempted to placate it. In the end, many abandoned the city's old gods and fell to worshipping the foul creature. They retreated from the surface and into the comfort of drug-induced dreams. The kingdom fell to barbarians, and eventually the desert claimed the land.

Cut off from the world above, the Cynidiceans changed over the course of generations, becoming pale-skinned and developing low-light vision and a sensitivity to bright light. The reigning priests of Zargon rule the population through fear and the use of a potent hallucinogen that keeps the populace docile—the elixir of fantasy.

The Present: Ashinana's Oasis

Lady Ashinana Vestang, a vain woman who grew up in the company of equally vain men, holds the title of marchioness, marking her as a member of the nobility even though her reach extends only as far as the boundaries of her two estates and her small country keep. Last year she acquired the title to a small oasis hamlet, which she renamed after herself and then promptly forgot.

It wasn't until a sandstorm unearthed an ancient Cynidicean outpost near a notorious section of the desert known as the Valley of Death, not more than half a week's journey from her desert holding, that she took any interest in the oasis. She quickly mounted an expedition to the site, intent on claiming whatever long-buried treasure had been unearthed. What she discovered were actual living Cynidiceans.

Disappointed by the lack of treasure, but still eager to profit from her find, the marchioness brought them back to her oasis where she planned a party to celebrate her first anniversary as mistress of the oasis. Now she had the perfect motif for the party. It would be a masquerade ball, an idea taken from the Cynidicean custom of mask wearing. Already popular in her hometown for her extravigant parties, this party attracted even more interest when she announced the unveiling of the discoveries made on her expedition.

Unknown to the lady, a viper sits in her oasis nest. One of the "specimens" brought back from the ruin, a Zargon-worshipping Cynidicean named Policrates, is secretly in contact with his priestess, Neheshru. The Cynidicean "outpost" was actually one of several "farms" utilized by the priesthood of Zargon to raise living sacrifices to their horned god. Zargon demands these living sacrifices often, and Neheshru plans on serving it the marchioness and her guests.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs attend the masquerade ball hosted by Marchioness Vestang in the small oasis community that bears her name. The characters can mingle with the other guests and even get acquainted with each other if they have not already met. During the party, Policrates drugs the guests with the elixir of fantasy, but the characters are spared thanks to Ilsinan, a cleric of the Cynidicean goddess Madarua (one of the old gods predating the cult of Zargon), leaving them the only people unaffected. The characters have only a short time before Neheshru's goblin accomplices arrive to herd the whole assemblage back to the Valley of Death, where they are probably never seen again.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure opens with the entire oasis abuzz about the forthcoming "Masque of Dreams," a party hosted by the marchioness to commemorate her first year as lady of the oasis and to celebrate her recent archeological discoveries near the Valley of Death. Nearly the entire oasis has been invited, as the Lady likes a large audience. Many foreign aristocrats and merchants have also been invited. The characters, who need not know each other at this point, might get on the guest list in variety of ways. They might be natives to the oasis, traveling merchants, or hired help. Each character should have their own background and individual reasons for attending.

CHAPTER ONE: ASHINANA'S OASIS

The adventure begins a few days before the party, allowing the characters to get acquainted with Ashinana's Oasis and its inhabitants. Characters native to the area probably know quite a bit about the oasis, while those just arriving can find out what they need to knowfrom the inhabitants. The masquerade is public knowledge and several merchant stalls and buildings around the oasis are studded with posts proclaiming the event.

During the festivities, which unofficially commence the week before the ball, the oasis becomes packed with visitors, camp followers, laborers, merchants, nobles, and guards. Most bring their own temporary shelters, but the more genteel guests stay in their aristocratic friend's villas. The most important guests (like Duke Sallin) stay in the marchioness' manor. During this period the meager population doubles to over three hundred. Buskers, merchants, and a temporary camel pen clog the area in front of the manor and the gp limit limit for the town increases to 2,000 gp.

Despite the sudden rush of guests, Ashinana's Oasis remains a quaint rural hamlet with a few merchants and craftsmen and a single inn, the Dancing Tabi. The town guard consists of six under-worked mercenaries (LN male human warrior 1) who mainly concern themselves with petty theft and public disturbances. Though laziness usually keeps the guards from starting any trouble of their own, PCs flaunting or abusing their abilities may inspire the guards to casual persecution. For more details on the citizens of Ashinana's Oasis, see "The Partygoers" in Chapter Two.

Ashinana's Oasis (hamlet): Conventional; AL LN; 100 gp limit; Assets 800 gp; Population 176; Mixed (human 122, halfling 12, dwarf 6, elf 4, gnome 4, half-elf 2).

Authority Figures: **Lady Ashinana Vestang**, female half-elf aristocrat 2/sorcerer 1; **Delvis Sandstone**, male dwarf fighter 2 (The Lady's Chief of Security).

Party Crashers (EL 1)

One night shortly before the ball a group of goblins sneaks into town on foot to deliver a powerful drug known as the elixir of fantasy to Policrates. His orders are to use it on the party guests as part of a plan to rescue the Cynidicean sacrifices and turn the tables on their captors. The goblins' delivery mission complete, they decide to do a little pre-raid looting. They creep about the various huts, tents, and stalls and make off with anything that seems valuable. Any characters wandering around after dusk might encounter them.

Creatures: These three goblins are more interested in stealing than fighting, and attempt to escape if they are outnumbered.

Goblin Warriors (3): hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 133.

Development: Captured goblins don't know a whole lot about the plan. Their mission was to deliver a wrapped urn (containing a large quantity of elixir of fantasy) to one of the "pale skins" (Cynidiceans, in this case Policrates).

If the characters come to the conclusion that there may be something afoot and try to warn the oasis of their suspicions, most people don't take the threat seriously. There haven't been any sizable goblin raids in the area in some time, and with all the guards and warriors in town to protect their charges it is impossible to imagine that they would attack now. The marchioness has kept her Cynidicean servants hidden from public view and refuses to acknowledge their existence before she unveils them. She takes exception to anyone trying to "interfere" with her masquerade ball.

House Rules

Lady Vestang made it a point to invite nearly everyone in the oasis to witness the unveiling of the Cynidiceans, in order to present herself as a magnanimous ruler. Even so, there are rules.

In an effort to make the peasants who live under her watchful eye less revolting, the marchioness has imported a number of tailors to outfit them. For nearly a month before the event, tailors and seamstresses have toiled over the outfits to be worn by the common folk. Characters in town during this time are directed to one of the many temporary tents just outside the manor gates by **Hajean Qatari** (N human male bard 1), town crier and unofficial "peasant organizer." Here they are measured and assigned colorful masks and outfits. The masks, set out on tables in the courtyard, range from human and animal faces to bizarre monsters, all offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Characters who arrive at the party underdressed (or in soiled or otherwise worn-looking garb) are turned away by the town guard, all of whom are in attendance and go dressed in dark robes and masks to conceal their weapons and armor. Characters carrying obvious weapons or wearing inordinate amounts of armor are strictly forbidden, and must don costumes, bluff, or sneak their way past the guards to get in.

Lady Vestang's Manor

Ashinana has only lived in the manor for the last few months. Prior to that ,she had never set eyes on her oasis domain. The discovery of the Cynidicean outpost peaked her interest in the region, though she does not plan on staying in the tiny

backwater any longer than necessary. For now, though, it is convenient enough for her purposes.

The manor is of a classical style, with wide arched doorways and plenty of windows. For several hours before the party the house is absolutely crammed with visiting nobles, respected sages, and powerful merchants and their entourages. The courtyard is jammed with carriages while servants scurry everywhere. The marchioness keeps her Cynidicean specimens and art pieces hidden until the party, limiting Policrates and the others to the servants' wing.

As the manor gets little use normally, it contains very few pieces of furniture outside of the bedrooms on the second floor, the office, and the servants' quarter. During the party, several jeweled masks of excellent quality are displayed on the walls and on small plinths throughout the great hall and upper gallery. Most of the thirty masks are worth 10 gp, but there are four very ornate masks each worth 500 gp. All four of these masks are in the grand hall.

Grand Hall

This hall holds the center of the party, which then spills into the mostly vacant lounge area, dining room upper gallery, and patio/oasis area. Musicians, acrobats, and servants bearing trays full of fruit, wine, and finger foods move through the crowd, wearing masks only slightly less gaudy than the guests'.

Patio

During the party, the marchioness arranged to have several animal handlers bring and display a number of exotic animals thought to be important to the Cynidiceans including: monkeys, colorful song birds, banded lizards, hairless dogs, zebras, and even a caged krenshar, all of them well-groomed and decorated with bows or a rhinestone collar. The monkeys sport human-looking masks.

Creature: The most popular beast, as well as the most dangerous, is the krenshar. Many aristocrats and merchants try baiting the creature,

hoping it performs its face-scare trick for their dates. At some point after the toast, Sir Kendler attempts to free the creature in order to recapture it single-handedly (see "The Partygoers" below).

Hairless Dogs (4): hp 6;; *Monster Manual* 271

Krenshar: hp 12; *Monster Manual* 163.

Banded **Lizards (6):** hp 2 each; *Monster Manual* 275.

Monkeys (4): hp 4 each; *Monster Manual* 276.

Song Birds (6): hp 1 each; *Monster Manual* 278 (raven).

Zebras (2): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 273 (light horse).

Treasure: Unlike the other collars, the krenshar's is studded with quartz and is worth 300 gp.

Servants' Rooms

The northernmost room has been the home of several Cynidicean servants, including Policrates and two Zargonite thugs, for the last several months.

Creatures: The tall, lanky Policrates is Vestang's head Cynidicean servant and the person responsible for spiking the drinks with the elixir of fantasy. When he first met the marchioness, he sensed in her a hunger for power he knew he could exploit for his mistress Neheshru.When the vain surface woman took him and his fellows back to the oasis, it did not take him long to suggest staging a grand party in honor of her finds. Taken with the idea, Vestang made all the preparations, and now, two months later, the masquerade ball is set to begin. Thanks to the delivery from the Valley of Death, the wily servant's plan has come to fruition.

Policrates and Zargonite Thugs (2): hp 5, as page 30 but without any gear except for concealed daggers.

Barracks

Three bunk beds, foot trunks, and a small table account for all of the furnishings in this room.

Creatures: The marchioness likes to keep her guards close, and billets them in this room. Usually only two of the six are on duty at any given time.

Development: All of the guards are on duty during the party. They wear an assortment of masks and dark robes to conceal their armor and weapons.

Treasure: A search of the guards' footlockers yields 50 gp in loose coins.

Delvis's Room

This room is sparsely furnished, with a simple bed, a small table, and a chair. Hanging on the wall over the table is a painting depicting a mountain landscape.

Delvis, the dwarf guard captain is rarely here, but can occasionally be found either sleeping or staring at the painting hanging over the table: a picture of his lost mountain home.

Creatures: Delvis is a middle-aged dwarven warrior and, as far as he knows, the only surviving member of his clan. Delvis' people were routed from the their mountain home by an expansionist clan of duergar. He now serves as Lady Vestang's Chief of Security, a job in which he takes a great deal of pride. He speaks and acts in a clipped military fashion and expects his subordinates to do the same.

Delvis Sandstone **CR 2**
Male dwarf fighter 2
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; +4 dodge vs. giants
hp 21 (2 HD)
Fort +6 (+8 vs poison), **Ref** +1, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. spells)

Spd 20 ft.
Melee mwk heavy flail +5 (1d10+2/19–20)
Ranged light repeating crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ stability, stonecunning
Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (repeating crossbow), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (repeating crossbow)
Skills Intimidate +3, Jump +7
Possessions full plate, masterwork heavy flail, light repeating crossbow with 20 bolts

Development: While at the party, Delvis never lets his guard down for a moment. How could he, with so many masked strangers milling around the house? He wears his polished bronze and steel helmet with eye guards and his chainmail that everyone knows he means business.

When he's exposed to the elixir, Delvis has a severe reaction and suffers a horrible flashback to his soldiering days. After the toast, he retrieves his repeating crossbow and heads for the stable (area **19**) to try and rescue his imaginary comrades-in-arms from a horde of duergar and goblins that he believes have them pinned down there. He douses all the lights in the stable and coach house, leaving the doors between the two rooms open, and waits at the south side of the stable with his crossbow ready to fire on the first target that presents itself. He sees all other humanoids as goblinoids or duergar, making attempts to negotiate almost useless (starting attitude hostile).

He won't leave without his fallen companions Dolem and Kija (an upside-down bucket on a spade and barrel full of apples, respectively). If the party befriends him, he begs any obvious cleric to heal his "comrades," turning violent if they don't comply.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Because of the focused nature of his hallucination, Delvis does not have the 50% chance to loose an action each round that other drugged characters have and therefore is worth a full experience point award should he be defeated.

Coach House

This currently houses Duke Sallin's carriage, and little else.

Stable

After the toast, Delvis Sandstone ushers all the horses outside and makes his "last stand" here (see "Delvis Sandstone" above).

Guest Rooms

Half of these doors are locked (Open Lock DC 25), but there is little treasure here—most of the guests are wearing whatever baubles they brought with them.

Ashinana's Room

Knowing that there would be a number of commoners in her home, the marchioness has locked the doors to her room (Open Lock DC 25).

Creature: Lady Ashinana Vestang is highly motivated and ruthless, although charming enough to appear innocent. One of her goals at the party is to attract a "suitable mate," which, to her, means a man of political importance who stays away from home and is nearing the end of his natural lifespan.

Lady Ashinana Vestang
CR 2
Female half-elf aristocrat 2/ sorcerer 1
N Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Elven, Dwarven

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11
hp 12 (3 HD)

Lady Ashinana Vestang

Immune sleep
Fort +1, **Ref** +2 **Will** +6

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +4 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Spells Known (CL 1st, +1 melee touch, +3 ranged touch)
1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 13), *magic missile*
0 (5/day)—*detect magic, light, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15
SQ elven blood, summon familiar
Feats Great Fortitude, Persuasive
Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Sense Motive +7
Possessions masterwork dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, diamond hairpin (150 gp), ring of keys to manor doors

Development: While drugged, Ashinana becomes a complete megalomaniac, indulging in all of her power fantasies. Dressed like mural representations of Queen Zenobia and encouraged by Policrates, she believes herself to be the Queen, brought back from the dead by divine will to lead her people into a new golden age. Given the chance, she leads any drugged guests that she can convince to follow her to the Valley of Death.

Treasure: Lady Vestang's closet is full of expensive clothing worth 1,000 gp in total.

Wellhead (EL 1)

A rough-hewn stone stair leads down into a cool, dimly lit cave.

Development: The door to this room is locked (Open Lock DC 25) and barred from the pantry side. Characters in the kitchen after the toast can automatically hear Ilsinan pounding on the other side of the door.

During the party, Policrates discovered Ilsinan tampering with his plan to drug the party guests' drinks. He bound and locked her in the wellhead, intending to take her back with the raiders to be sacrified.

Until she was caught, Ilsinan had been pretending to be a Zargonite, but in fact she is a spy working for the cult of Madarua, sent to keep tabs on the Zargonites in the Valley of Death. Madarua, often depicted as a warrior woman holding a sheaf of grain in one hand and a sword in the other, was one of the three Cynidicean gods displaced by Zargon's ascension. When Policrates allowed himself and a few others to be taken to Ashinana's Oasis, the priestess thought it best that she went as well.

Creatures: After escaping her bonds, Ilsinan pounds on the stairwell door hoping to get someone's attention, but by the time she starts the partygoers have all taken the toast and succumbed to the effects of the elixir.

Treasure: An everburning torch lights the wellhead.

Ilsinan, Acolyte of Madarua **CR 1**
Female human (Cynidicean) cleric 1 (Madarua)
NG Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Human, Cynidicean

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 10 (1 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike –1 (1d3–1)
Ranged *magic stone* +1 (as spell)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** –1
Special actions death touch 1/day (1d6), protective ward (1/day), turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+2, 1st)
Spells Prepared (CL 1st, –1 melee touch, +1 ranged touch)
1st—*magic stone, sanctuary*^{D}, *summon monster I*
0—*detect magic, light, read magic*
D Domain spell **Domains** Death, Protection

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13
SQ light sensitivity
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes
Skills Concentration +6, Knowledge (religion) +4
Possessions holy symbol of Madarua

Light Sensitivity Cynidiceans are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Ilsinan

CHAPTER TWO: DREAMS...

After the guests have mingled, Lady Vestang gathers everyone together for the unveiling of her surprise in the Grand Hall. A pair of servants roll out a large cage covered by a sheet into the center of the room. The crowd goes silent as Lady Vestang anounces, "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you... the children of Cynidicea!"

At that moment the servants pull aside the sheet, revealing Policrates and two other Cynidicean servants dressed in loincloths and wearing masks. At a nod from the marchioness they remove their masks, revealing their pale skin, bone-white hair, and large eyes. The crowd goes speechless until someone starts clapping, at which point the rest of the guests fall in line and clap madly for a full min-

ute. Ashinana feigns modesty while more servants move through the crowd with trays full wine. At the end of the clapping Ashinana proposes a toast: "To Cynidicea, the Lost City!" The guests cheer and the musicians strike up an exotic tune.

Before she was discovered by Policrates's minions, Ilsinan attempted to sabotage the Zargonites's plans by switching the drugged goblets with clean ones. Though she was only able to switch a few drinks before Policrates caught her and locked her in the wellhead, these drug-free drinks make their way out into the party, ultimately coming to rest with the PCs. Though there should be a few other partygoers who similarly escape the drug's effects, the vast majority of the 150 NPCs in attendance quickly become delusional as the elixir kicks in.

The Partygoers

The elixir of fantasy is an unpredictable drug, and as it kicks in, the partygoers experience a wide variety of delusions. Most of these delusions revolve around the costumes the drinkers find themselves in, as the disorientation from the drug causes a temporary loss of identity and a desperate scramble to explain their appearances. Listed below are several of the more important citizens of Ashinana's Oasis, as well as their reactions to the elixir.

- **Haerekoe** (male human expert 1), a dreamy tavern-boy dressed as an impish warrior, believes himself to be a rogue and sneaks around the party, picking the pockets of the other guests.
- **Kella Woodwain** (female human expert 1), sole proprietor of Woodwain's Exports, is dressed as a mouse and believes herself to be a wererat. She attacks everyone around her and flees from anything silver (including the cutlery).
- **Nyral** (male human expert 2) the moneychanger wears a rust monster mask. He wanders the party, prodding characters carrying noticeable amounts of metal with his mask's feathery antennae, all the while whining about how hungry he is. PCs can rid themselves of the annoyance by simply throwing metal objects in his path.
- **Iccanti Dustreader** (female elf expert 2) normally leads wealthy clients on hunting expeditions, but once the drug takes hold, she begins a new safari—this one against partygoers dressed as "big game."
- **Ruggles Ironbeard** (male dwarf expert 2), a pious smith and wainwright dressed as a bullywug. He wanders the manor, smashing any objects that don't live up to his dwarven standards of craftsmanship.
- **Duke Gunrad Sallin** (male human warrior 1/aristocrat 2) is an overly vain and pompous armchair general in full military regalia. He wears a mask of what he believes to be a Cynidicean emperor crowned with laurels (but is actually a dungsweeper masking the smell of his profession). Two of his own guardsmen (male human warrior 1), dressed as wolves, accompany him and defend him aggressively in classic canine fashion. After the toast, Duke Sallin believes himself a paladin, offering randomly selected "immoral" guests a chance to repent before smiting them.
- **Sir Gennardo Kendler** (male human aristocrat 2) is an aging knight full of boisterous lies and half-truths about his youthful deeds of valor. After the drug takes effect, he releases the krenshar on the patio in order to prove he still has what it takes. He wears an elaborate peacock mask.
- **Mabriel** (female human aristocrat 1) is 15 and has lived a relatively sheltered life at court in a nearby kingdom, where she spent her time listening to bards' tales of romance and adventure. Under the influence of the elixir she acts out the part of a heroine from those stories, treating randomly selected characters with contempt before "discovering her true feelings" for them moments later. Her mask is that of a beautiful woman.

A short while after the onset of their delusions, Mabriel, Haerekoe, and Duke Sallin join up to form an "adventuring party" that impedes PCs by constantly placing itself in danger once the real fighting begins.

Other Guests and Their Masks

In addition to the named NPCs above, dozens of guests from near and far

The Elixir of Fantasy

Developed decades ago by the Zargonites from the distillate of mushrooms that grow beneath Cynidicea, the elixir of fantasy is a powerful hallucinogen (ingested, DC 17 Fortitude save) that makes the user believe he is something else. The priests of Zargon use the elixir to control their fellow Cynidiceans. The following statistics use the rules for drugs in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not use that book, treat the substance as a poison instead (Fortitude DC 15 +1 per week of continuous use; initial and secondary effects as described below).

Initial Effect: The imbiber retreats into a dreamlike state, lost in her own fantasies for 2d4 hours. During this time, she has a 50% chance to lose any action she attempts, as described in the *bestow curse* spell description. Longtime users of the elixir typically develop favorite fantasies that they live out over and over in exhaustive detail.

Secondary Effect: 1 point of Wisdom damage.

Side Effects: While the elixir of fantasy is in effect, the user takes a –2 penalty on all initiative checks and saves against illusion spells and effects.

Overdose: None.

prowl the property in various stages of derangement, mimicking the animals or professions depicted on their masks. Determine the encounter levels for any combat based on the number of participating NPCs and their class level, but keep in mind that the debilitating effects of the elixir should halve the challenge ratings for most NPCs.

Below is a list of suggested masks and NPC actions, intended for use as a random generator or merely inspiration.

1 **Bee**: These guests "buzz" about the party, carrying vases, pots, or bags and collecting small articles like coins, candles, and food. If attacked, they use kitchen knives to defend themselves, but promptly "die" after their first successful hit, falling comatose until the elixir wears off.

2 **Bird or Butterfly**: These people believe themselves to be fluttering birds or butterflies, flapping their arms and wheeling about the characters at the most inopportune times. Occasionally one or more may attempt to launch themselves from second-story balconies or windows, with predictably tragic results.

3 **Fish**: Those wearing fish masks generally end up out in the oasis, swimming in small schools. The PCs might also stumble upon the odd fish-masked guest lying on the floor and flopping weakly about, begging to be thrown in the oasis. (Unfortunately, these "fish" can't breathe water, and drown if not rescued.)

4 **Camel**: Several guests with these masks walk silently about the villa in a single line, occasionally going to the oasis to drink. If anyone interferes with their progress, they spit on the offender before running away without saying a word.

5 **Squid**: The wearers of these tentacled masks move by walking or swimming backwards, occasionally latching on to other partygoers and refusing to let go until more attractive targets present themselves. When threatened, they run (or swim) around the area attempting to douse the lights.

6 **Stirge or Bat**: Stirge or bat mask wearers "flutter" about, stealing people's drinks and then handing back empty glasses. Both types gather in small segregated groups (1d4 individuals) in dark, out-of-the-way alcoves or corners. Some "bats" attempt to hang upside down from the second floor banister with varying degrees of success.

7 **Termite**: The two guests with termite masks start breaking up anything wooden and piling it outside. They run if confronted.

8 **Vulture**: A trio of local coopers thought it would be funny if they all took vulture masks. When encountered, this black-clad group somberly follows the characters around waiting for things to die and discussing how each character might taste.

CHAPTER THREE: ...AND NIGHTMARES

Sometime after the toast, but before the players grow too accustomed to the other guests' strange behavior, a raiding party arrives to claim the captured Cynidiceans and as many partygoers as possible.

Creatures: The group is comprised of a bugbear named Durakka and twenty-four goblin warriors mounted on dromedary camels. The raiders split up into several groups to handle various missions, all relating to removing the partygoers back to their desert lair near the Lost City of Cynidicea.

Durakka, female bugbear: hp 16; *Monster Manual* 29.

Goblin warriors (24): hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 133.

Camels (25): hp 19 each; *Monster Manual* 270.

Tactics: Two groups of four goblins each raid the two largest camel pens in the oasis, driving the camels into the villa's courtyard. This takes approximately 10 minutes, barring any complications.

Four groups of three goblins enter the villa through the coach house, barracks, patio, and servants' hall. The group that enters the coach house remains mounted. Once in position, they coax, scare, or beat the affected partygoers toward the courtyard.

A final group consisting of four mounted goblins and Durakka (also mounted) hangs back on the edge of the patio overseeing operations, prodding

partygoers on the patio into the ballroom as well as running down any escapees. If this group notices a fight in the grand hall, the goblins urge their mounts in a charge through the open doors. Durakka does likewise if she is attacked or if the goblins look like they need help.

If Policrates is still active, he joins the group on the patio in overseeing operations, coaxing Ashinana/Zenobia into leading an exodus back to the Lost City.

As soon as most of the partygoers are in the courtyard, the raiders mount up and begin moving the prisoners, now riding or tied to the stolen camels, off into the desert. A unit of four goblins stays an hour behind the rest as a rearguard, keeping PCs from following immediately.

Complications

If Delvis still lives, he puts up quite a fight in the stable. He ambushes the group of goblins that enters through the coach house and draws a lot of attention to himself, killing several attackers before being brought down by sheer numbers.

The guests' delusions make some of them difficult to control. The goblins are more interested in victims who are easily cowed than people who are going to resist them every step of the way, so particularly violent guests are incapacitated or killed, while a few hard-to-reach or hidden guests are simply left behind.

If the PCs capture Policrates and try to use him as a bargaining chip, they quickly discover that Durakka and the goblins don't really care about him or the other Cynidiceans, only about staying off Zargon's menu themselves.

If the characters bar the doors and shut the front gate before the goblins arrive, they face a siege unless they leave a large number of guests out on the patio. If they do, the goblins take whom they can, along with any camels, and leave. The goblins also flee if their numbers are reduced to 8 or less.

Even if the PCs manage to overcome the raiders at Lady Vestang's manor, groups of skirmishers manage to harvest a number of locals unable to attend the party and lead them off into the desert.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTO THE WASTES

In the likely event that the goblins make off with prisoners, it falls to the characters, as the only group to successfully stand up to the raiders, to venture into the desert after them. If the characters have paid attention or ask around about the caravan that originally brought Lady Vestang her prisoners, they should quickly realize that the ultimate destination is the Valley of Death. Characters who set out quickly find an easy trail to follow (DC 10 Survival check), but blowing sands and the possibility of a sandstorm should prove worrisome and raise the DC by 4 for each day that they don't actively pursue the raiders.

Random Desert Encounters

There is a 50% chance per day of an encounter while in the desert surrounding Ashinana's Oasis. These are in addition to the two "keyed" encounters detailed below. Roll or pick from the table below.

Degalla's Riddle (EL 3)

Dragongrave is an appropriately named hollow in the desert, shielded from sun and storm by looming stony bluffs. Only

the bones of its draconic namesake remain, their treasures long since looted or buried under the shifting desert sands. Locals fear that the dragon's ghost still haunts these lands and consider the region taboo, something the goblinoids have used to their advantage.

Creature: No spirits haunt this land, but a wyrmling brass dragon named Degalla does. Alone since her family was killed by Juzkooli, an old blue dragon who lives deeper in the desert, Degalla fled here and now nests in the skull of a great brass wyrm. The skull rests near a narrow defile within the gorge. When the goblin caravan passes she remains hidden, but when she spots the characters, she decides to try talking with them. To be safe and to prolong the discussion for as long as possible, she stays hidden and pretends to be the ghost of the skeletal behemoth she is hiding in.

Through the skull, she insists that the characters stay and explain their business in her domain. She then proceeds to ask them further questions about themselves, their homelands, and anything else she can think of, hinting that if they fail to answer, she might be forced to unleash her "horrible unloving might" upon them. If the PCs become stubborn she challenges them to solve a riddle. If the characters can guess the answer she lets them pass.

A storm without water,
And earth without land,
I drown the unwary,
Tell me what I am.

If the characters cannot answer the riddle correctly ("sandstorm") or become violent, Degalla tries to manipulate them into approaching the skull, then breathes a blast of *sleep* gas through the nose or eye socket of the skull and flies off to burrow in the sand. If trapped she fights to the death.

Degalla's attitude starts out as indifferent, but should the characters make her helpful, she follows them discretely, helping them should they become lost or run out of food or water. To do this they will have to give a particularly clever toy or game, or 25 gp as tribute for permission to pass through. If the PCs are humble and talkative and spend at least an hour with her, they can also get on her good side with a successful Diplomacy check.

Degalla, female wyrmling brass dragon: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 80.

Treasure: Buried under the gargantuan skull is Degalla's meager hoard of 4,235 cp, 1,972 sp, 505 gp, 2 moss agates (15 gp each), a chunk of amber (90 gp), a climber's kit, a *potion of detect thoughts*, and a scroll of *doom*, *hold person*, and *silence*.

DEATH'S OASIS (EL 2)

From a distance this lonely stand of trees and palms appears to promise water, but on closer inspection the trees and plants are dead, their leaves brittle and brown. At the center of this area is a cracked dust bowl.

Death's Oasis takes up an area 60 feet in diameter, surrounded by a ring of

Desert Encounters

d%	Encounter	Source	EL
01–10	1d4 bandits (halfling warrior 1)	*Monster Manual* 149	1
11–15	Dust storm	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 94	3
16–25	1d4 Tiny monstrous scorpions	*Monster Manual* 287	1
26–35	2 Small vipers	*Monster Manual* 279	1
36–40	1 Medium monstrous scorpion	*Monster Manual* 287	1
41–50	1 Medium viper	*Monster Manual* 279	1
51–55	1d4 fire beetles	*Monster Manual* 285	1
56–65	1d4+1 jackals	*Monster Manual* 271 (dog)	1
66–75	1d6 human skeletons	*Monster Manual* 225	1
76–80	1 monitor lizard	*Monster Manual* 275	2
81–85	1 vargouille	*Monster Manual* 254	2
86–90	1 ashworm	*Sandstorm* 140	2
91–95	1 bat swarm	*Monster Manual* 237	2
96–100	1d3 hyenas	*Monster Manual* 274	3

"Storytime" by Jeff Lee Johnson

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TIME TO PLAN!

desiccated foliage that extends outward another twenty feet on all sides. Until very recently, this small watering hole was used by bandits and nomads, but all evidence of water is gone now thanks to the area's thirsty new undead inhabitant.

Creature: The dried-out form of an endlessly thirsty desiccator, the undead form of a creature once native to the Elemental Plane of Water, lingers among the remains of its handiwork. The desiccator appears as a malnourished, salt-encrusted humanoid husk with a distended stomach. This one stands a little less than four feet tall. Its mouth, a round toothy hole constantly sucking at whatever moisture is left in the air, is its only remaining facial feature, the rest having been scoured away by the desert winds.

DESICCATOR **CR 2**

NE Small undead (water)

Libris Mortis 94

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Aquan

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 26 (4 HD); hp related special abilities

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Weaknesses elemental turning vulnerability, inescapable craving

Spd 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d6 plus fatigue)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1

Atk Options desiccating breath, fatiguing touch

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con —, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 13

SQ undead traits

Feats Ability Focus (desiccating breath), Improved Initiative

Skills Listen +7, Search +7, Spot +7

Desiccating Breath (Su) 15-foot cone of desiccating air every 1d4 rounds, damage 1 Con, Fortitude DC 15 negates. Creatures with the water subtype take a –4 penalty on their save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fatiguing Touch (Su) A desiccator's slam attack makes living creatures fatigued (DC 13 Fortitude save negates). Creatures with the water subtype take a –4 penalty on their save. If the victim fails the save, the desiccator also gains 5 temporary hit points, which last for up to 1 hour. A creature already fatigued cannot become exhausted as the result of this touch. The save DC is Charisma-based.

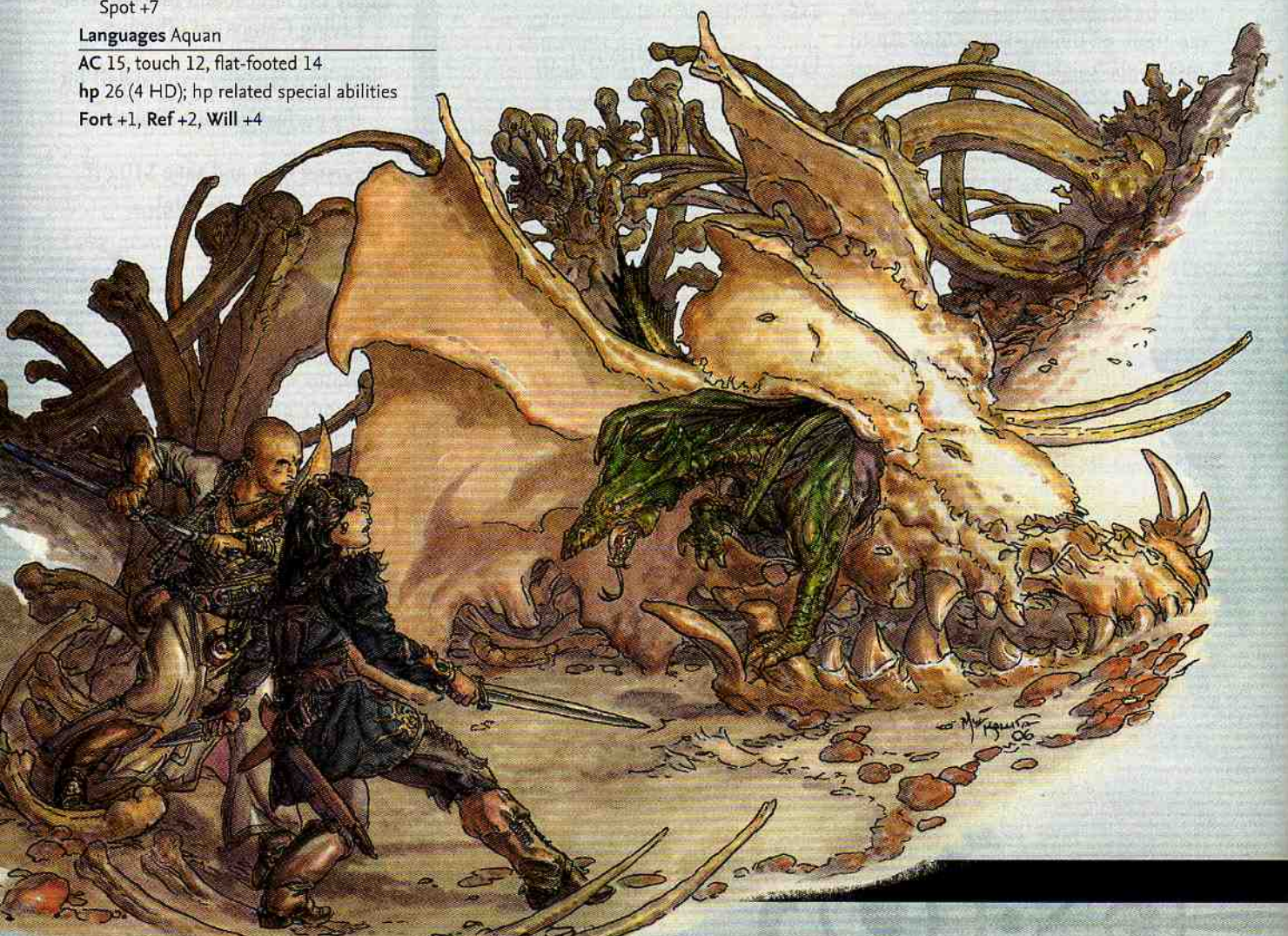
Elemental Turning Vulnerability (Ex) A character who can turn undead and also turn water creatures gains a +2 bonus on turning checks to turn a desiccator. The same is true for rebuking attempts.

Inescapable Craving A desiccator has an inescapable craving for water, which it absorbs by using its fatiguing touch ability.

Tactics: The desiccator lies hidden in the dead foliage. When PCs draw near, it leaps out to ambush them.Characters who throw water at the creature may distract it for 1d2 rounds.

Treasure: Half-buried under the cracked earth is a strongbox dumped in the oasis by a band of bandits who planned on retrieving it later. The box is iron and set with an average lock (DC 25). It contains 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, and 225 gp.

Iron Strongbox: Hardness 10; hp 30; Break 28.



GOBLIN CARAVAN

Out in the desert the goblins guide their captives (whose water they drug regularly) toward the Valley of Death some hundred and twenty miles away. Moving with prisoners slows the entire group. Each night, the caravan progresses 30 miles across the sands. By day, they post four guards on the perimeter of their camp while most of the goblins rest inside tents (two goblins each). The captives are corralled with the majority of the camels and are always watched by at least two guards.

The prisoners behave themselves, too caught up in their dreams to notice the plight they are in. Troublesome prisoners are left with their hands bound to wander the desert without food or water.

For tactical information regarding the goblin camps, see "The Lost City," below.

THE LOST CITY (EL 4)

Barring bad weather or PC intervention, it takes the goblin caravan three days to reach the Valley of Death, at which point they set up camp in the shadow of the partially buried pyramid built ages ago to honor the rulers of Cinidicea. They send emissaries (including Policrates) into the hidden tunnels that lead to lost Cynidicea (see sidebar). Neheshru emerges and sorts through the drugged captives, carefully determining the order in which they are to be sacrificed to Zargon. Such is the scene when the PCs arrive, assuming they followed promptly. (If the PCs dally along the way and arrive days after the goblins, they may find that some of the prisoners have already been sacrificed.)

Creatures: While the remainder of the goblin raiders are camped around the massive prison tent, Neheshru and two of her thugs step forward to handle any attackers. Durakka and the goblins are more than happy to stand back and let the Zargonites handle any combat, forming a ring of spectators around any fight and attacking only if personally targeted. If Neheshru is defeated, the raiders are shaken and scatter into the surrounding dunes, unwiling to confront anyone dangerous enough to defeat Neheshru.

Neheshru, Priestess of Zargon CR 3
Female human (Cynidicean) cleric 3 (Zargon)
LE Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Cynidicean, Infernal

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15
hp 20 (3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft.
Melee +1 *heavy mace* +6 (1d8+3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +3 damage)
Special actions rebuke undead 2/day (–1, 2d6+2, 3rd)
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *wand of sound burst* (27 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, 4th for evil spells; +4 melee touch, +2 ranged touch)
2nd—*bull's strength*, *death knell* (DC 14), *shatter*[D] (DC 14)
1st—*bane*, *cause fear* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*, *protection from good*[D]
0—*detect magic*, *cure minor wounds*, *read magic*, *resistance*
D Domain spell **Domains** Destruction, Evil

Abilities Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 8
SQ light sensitivity
Feats Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)
Skills Concentration +11, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7
Possessions combat gear, breastplate, +1 *heavy mace*, light hammer, Zargon headdress (300 gp)

Light Sensitivity Cynidiceans are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Scaling the Adventure

"Masque of Dreams" is meant to challenge four 1st–level characters, but can be adapted for higher-level play. As always, remember to adjust the treasure awards to the new level.

For 2nd- or 3rd-level parties: Replace the krenshar on the patio with a leopard or lion; advance the squid in the wellhead by 2 or 3 Hit Dice; replace the goblins with hobgoblins; increase the character levels of NPCs by one for each level the party is above 1st.

B4: The Lost City

The lost city of Cinidicea first appeared in the early '80s, in Tom Moldvay's now classic adventure, *The Lost City*. The adventure focuses most of its length on detailing the upper five dungeon levels within the pyramid, but provides extensive notes and maps so DMs can expand the dungeon another five levels down into Zargon's lair, or even deeper to the underground city of Cinidicea itself. "Masque of Dreams" serves as a perfect introduction to a longer campaign set entirely in these dungeons and the lost city, which was also given an update to the current edition of the rules in issue #315 of *Dragon*.

Zargonite Thugs (2) **CR 1**

Male Human (Cynidicean) warrior 1

LE Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Cynidicean

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

Weaknesses light sensitivity

Spd 30 ft.

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

Feats Alertness, Point Blank Shot

Skills Climb +5, Intimidate +3, Listen +1, Spot +1

Possessions combat gear, studded leather, short sword, light crossbow with 15 bolts, 10 gp

Light Sensitivity Cynidiceans are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Treasure: If the raiders are successfully scattered, they abandon most of their gear. Each goblin carries a short sword, leather armor, supplies for traveling in the desert, and 10 gp.

Development: While this adventure presumes that the PCs' primary goal is to get the slowly sobering prisoners back to Ashinana's Oasis safely, the entrance to the lost empire of Cynidicea may hold a powerful allure for the PCs. The entrance to the pyramid's interior is hidden beyond a secret door on its second tier, a door that can be discovered witha DC 20 Search Check. What happens below the surface in the Valley of Death is left up to you.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

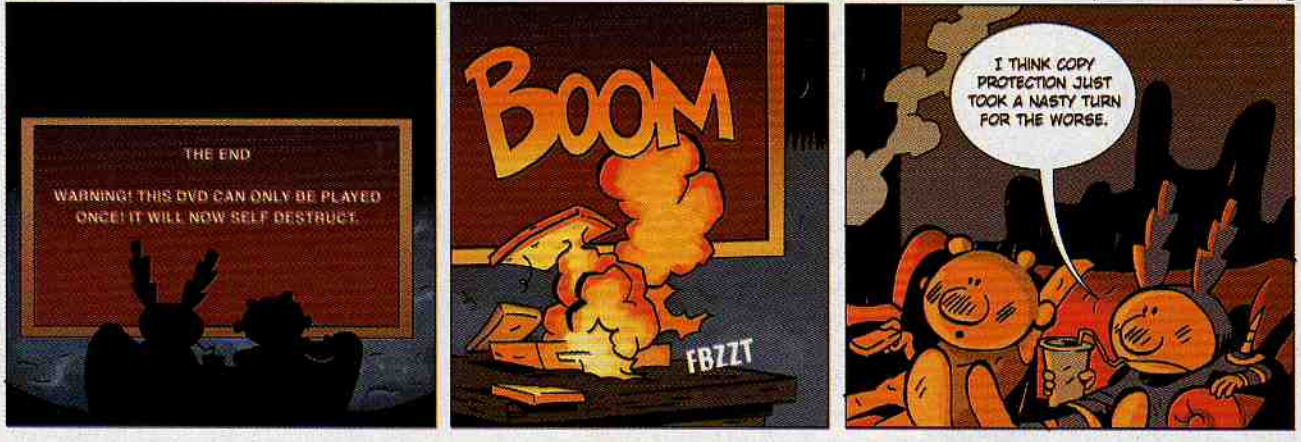
Characters who successfully bring Lady Vestang and most of the prisoners home are lauded as heroes, both by the Lady's guests and the townsfolk. Ashinana rewards them with 500 gp each. In addition, she's happy to sponser an expedition into the tunnels leading to Cynidicea if the PCs so desire, funding any future expeditions in exchange for a share of the spoils. If Ilsinan remains in the manor, she pushes the PCs in this direction, attempting to convince them to help her cult defeat the Zargonites.

Even if the PCs decide that they've seen enough of the Cynidiceans, adventure hooks abound. If he still lives, Delvis Sandstone takes the raid as a sign that it's time for him to reclaim his clan's ancestral mountain home, and grudgingly asks the PCs to accompany him in exchange for a chance to kill and loot the mountain's duergar overlords. Whatever they decide, word of the PCs' deeds spreads quickly to towns near and far as the various guests return to their homes.

Matt can't tell you too much because he blew his word count... again!

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting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Savage Tide

Here There Be Monsters

A long, perilous ocean journey behind them, the crew of the *Sea Wyvern* finds itself shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread. Their destination lies well over 150 miles to the south, miles heavy with the threat of the island's terrible inhabitants. Yet the unknown enemies are far more sinister, for more than just dinosaurs hunt the vast jungles. Before long, a cunning fiend picks up their trail, and its duplicitous master demands their sacrifice.

"Here There Be Monsters" is the fourth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in DUNGEON. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #351 of DRAGON explores the Isle of Dread in detail, providing a complete ecology of the island as the writings of Larissa Vanderboren. This article can be used as a player handout to represent the journals the group recovered from the Vanderboren family vault in the first adventure in this campaign.

The PCs should be 7th level when they begin "Here There Be Monsters." They should gain enough experience to advance to 8th level by the time they reach the shrine of Demogorgon in Part Four, and to 9th by the end of the adventure.

BY JASON BULMAHN
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (7TH–8TH) | WILDERNESS & DUNGEON CRAWL

Switching Sides

If the PCs agreed to Rowyn's offer to join the Lotus Dragons at the end of "There Is No Honor," this adventure needs little adjustment. They're still wrecked, and still need to work their way south to Farshore before they can reunite with their nefarious ally and set into motion their plans to capture Farshore's resources for the Lotus Dragons. The perils they face along the way remain unchanged.

Adventure Background

Three months ago the *Sea Wyvern* began its long journey across the Vohoun Ocean to reach the Isle of Dread. Funded by Lavinia Vanderboren, the expedition was to bring supplies, provisions, and colonists to the small settlement of Farshore, a colony established several years ago by the Vanderboren family. The journey was long and dangerous, but until the first storm, things were on schedule. In the storm's wake, the *Sea Wyvern* and Lavinia's ship the *Blue Nixie* were separated. The *Sea Wyvern* became mired in a supernatural sargasso, and after she escaped fell prey to an even more terrible storm. On the verge of sinking, the ship ran aground only a few hundred feet from the isle's northeastern shore. As the storm reached a crescendo, the PCs and their allies were thrown from the decks into the surging waters of a storm-wracked sea...

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs awake on the northern shore of the Isle of Dread, shaken from their ordeal but relatively intact. The *Sea Wyvern* lies holed, impaled on a reef a few hundred feet from shore, thus leaving only one option—a dangerous overland journey to Farshore. As the PCs take stock of the situation, a hungry tyrannosaurus wanders out of the jungle looking for a quick meal. After dealing with the beast, their expert Urol Forol plots a route to safety for them. Before the party leaves the shore, they must gather up all the survivors and as many provisions as they can find.

The journey to Farshore takes the castaways through a jungle inhabited by large predatory birds and hungry dinosaurs. After encountering an outcast aranea, the PCs come to an ancient underground ruin manned by monstrous scavengers and the restless dead. As they leave, they can't shake the suspicion that they are being watched.

On the other side of the mountains, the trail winds along a stretch of shoreline cliffs. A primitive band of gargoyles strikes at the PCs numerous times before they can leave the cliffs for the island interior. This transition is hampered by a number of mishaps, and eventually the group heads into the island interior.

The PCs then find themselves in a fog-shrouded jungle with no apparent way out. That night, the fiend who has been silently stalking them (a simian demon known as a bar-lgura) finally strikes, abducting Urol in the process. Recovering the expert leads the PCs to an ancient shrine to Demogorgon, forcing them to deal with the fiend and his minions.

Adventure Hooks

If you are not playing this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, there are several ways to motivate the PCs to get in on the action. The simplest is to use this adventure as part of any ocean-going expedition that ends in a shipwreck. Even if you are using "Here There Be Monsters" as part of the path, you may want to consider one of the options below to further involve the PCs with this adventure's plot.

Colonists: The PCs have struck out for the colony of Farshore to seek a new life, or perhaps to escape an old one. The *Sea Wyvern* offered an inexpensive way to reach the settlement, but the shipwreck has now forced them to take action.

Explorers: Rumor has it that the Isle of Dread is loaded with treasure, from ancient forgotten cities to valuable skins and spices. Beyond the monetary gains, the island is also said to be full of mysteries and ancient lore. If not for the other innocents, the PCs might just take to exploring the island from the crash site, but the other crew and passengers must be escorted to safety first.

PART ONE: TERROR BIRD JUNGLE

This adventure begins as the PCs wake on the northern shore of the Isle of Dread. It is early morning, and the storm has subsided. The air is cloyingly hot and humid, and damp sand clings to every available surface. The characters regain their senses on a lonely beach, desolate save for a scattering of wreckage and a few other survivors. Each of the PCs has whatever gear they were carrying at the time of the crash—all other gear is still on the ship, which is caught on the rocks 200 feet from shore.

Although all of the player characters automatically survive the shipwreck, the same fantastic luck does not hold for the *Sea Wyvern's* crew and passengers. Many of them were low-level commoners or experts, and the surging waters of the stormy sea have claimed most of them. Of the 23 brave souls who set out from Sasserine three months before, only a few survive.

"Here There Be Monsters" assumes that only four NPCs survive the shipwreck, although if any of the other NPCs on the boat have become important to the PCs or the plot, they should survive as well. Of course, the more survivors you have, the more difficult the adventure becomes to run; strive to keep only essential NPCs alive if you can. For additional survivors, you should use the notes on how these four react to the trials to come as guides and inspiration.

Stats for these four NPCs can be found in Appendix 1.

Amella Venkalie: Amella captained the *Sea Wyvern* if no PC stepped up to the task in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," otherwise she acted as the first mate or crewman. After the shipwreck, she becomes depressed and miserable. She looks to the PCs for guidance and does what she can to help.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is a spoiled and haughty nobleman who invested heavily in this voyage. After the shipwreck, he is furious with the PCs, blaming them and Amella for causing the wreck. He ignores the other NPCs and makes unreasonable demands for himself and his horse Thunderstrike, who managed to

swim ashore. Avner's poor servants were not so lucky—Banaby Chisk and Quenge Asper both perished in the storm, much to Avner's chagrin.

Tavey Nesk: A young and impressionable member of the *Sea Wyvern's* crew, Tavey idolizes one of the PCs. Tavey is terrified after the crash and looks to the PCs for protection.

Urol Forol: A gnome naturalist and self-proclaimed expert on the Isle of Dread, Urol is shaken up by the shipwreck, but thrilled to finally be on the island. He and Miss Crazzle (his crow animal companion) spend as much time as possible looking at the flora and fauna, collecting samples, and offering helpful tips to the characters.

About The Isle of Dread

Over 1,300 years ago, a fleet of Olman princes from across the eastern sea came upon a bounteous land and claimed it as their own. They cleared vast stretches of jungle on the island to plant crops, and built a fortified city that dwarfed all other settlements in the region atop a massive central plateau. Known as Thanaclan, this city became the heart of one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the far-flung Olman empire. Yet after 300 years of rule, the city-state of Thanaclan fell prey to the first savage tide. The tide washed over the entire island, bringing ruin and madness and death, and what remained would become known as the Isle of Dread.

The isle itself is a large landmass surrounded by treacherous reefs and smaller islands. Most of the island's coastline consists of rugged cliffs, but here and there isolated beaches allow safe landing. Most of the human population of the isle, descendants of the original rulers of Thanaclan, dwell on a southern peninsula, sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that rule the mainland by a great wall.

Weather on the Isle of Dread is at best uncomfortably warm and humid. Along the coast, temperatures have been known to dip as low as 64° F, while atop the central plateau or in the depths of the jungles it often rises above 90° F. The bulk of the Isle is covered with lush, tropical jungles, yet here and there reminders of the ancient Olmans can be found in the form of collapsed statues, ruined temples, and mysterious standing stones. Few examples of the isle's original fauna survive today (mostly limited to wild boars, rock baboons, and terror birds), for the isle is now overrun with terrible, legendary creatures. Chief and largest among these are the dinosaurs, or "thunder lizards" as the Olman natives call them. Yet there are other monsters dwelling in the hidden reaches of the isle, monsters that couple their fearsome countenances with equally fearsome intellects.

In "Here There Be Monsters," the PCs move along the eastern coast of the Isle of Dread, venturing into its interior for only a short time. In the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, the PCs have a chance to explore the Isle more completely. Wandering monster tables, details on the isle's secrets, and numerous encounters are presented there—if you wish to expand the events in "Here There Be Monsters," the next adventure is an excellent resource. You can also use the backdrop on the Isle of Dread that appeared in issue #114 of DUNGEON (also available as a PDF download at paizo.com). Finally, don't forget to check out issue #351 of DRAGON, which not only has a detailed ecology of the Isle of Dread presented in the format of journal fragments that can serve as player handouts and a new installment of "Savage Tidings," but also features a four-panel poster map of the Isle of Dread you can give to the PCs to help them plot their course to the colony of Farshore.

Hungry Welcome (EL 8)

Give the PCs a few moments to get their bearings, figure out who's still alive after the wreck, and consider their options. Before they can set any plans in motion, a tremendous roar tears through the heavy morning air.

Creature: A hungry tyrannosaurus has come to the beach in search of an easy meal. The dinosaur emerges from the jungle 60 feet from the PCs, and immediately bellows a roar as it notices them.

Tyrannosaurus: hp 180; *Monster Manual* 61.

Tactics: The tyrannosaurus charges the nearest PC, attacking with its formidable bite. After establishing a hold, it attempts to swallow a grappled character. The dinosaur flees once it is dropped to below 40 hit points, so long as it has at least one creature in its stomach—otherwise it fights to the death.

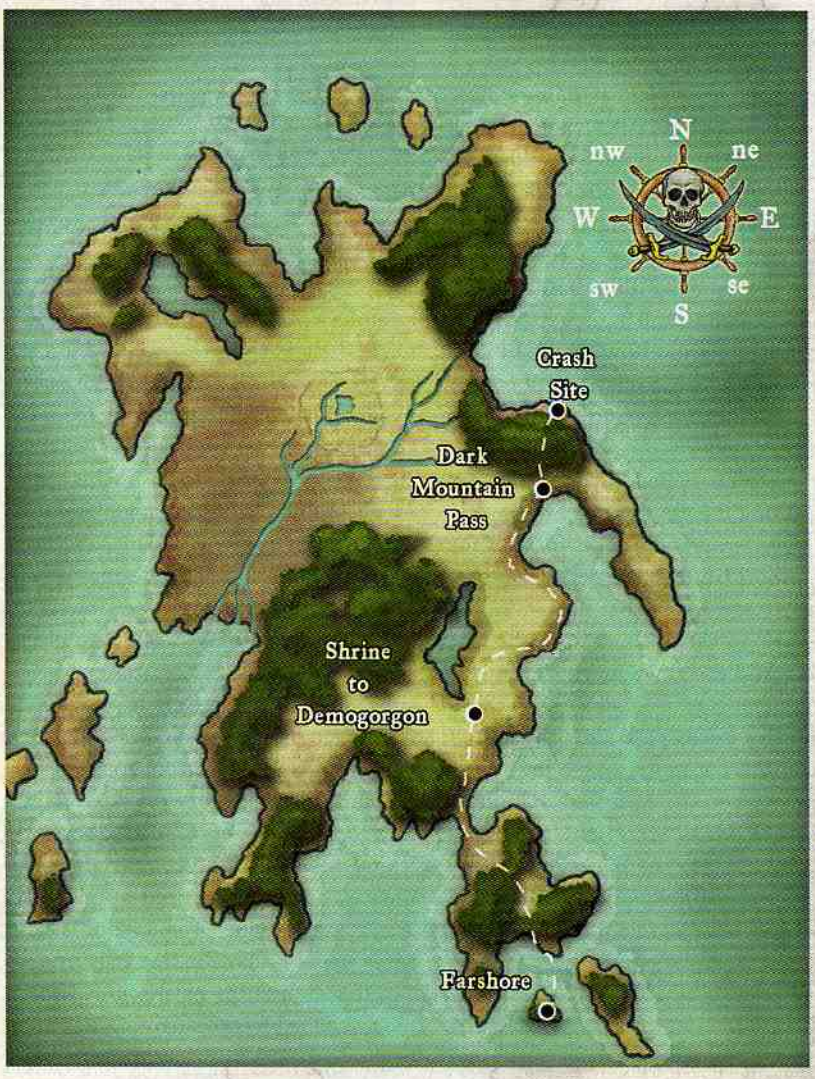
Developments: After the fight with the tyrannosaurus is over, the surviving NPCs make their way down the beach to contact the characters. Heading up the pack is Avner, who is absolutely furious about the shipwreck and demands to know what the characters plan to do to ensure his safety. Amella follows behind him looking miserable, while Tavey looks to his hero, hoping for inspiration and offering to help him clean up. Urol, however, strays a bit far behind the others, picking up pieces of seaweed, shells, and any other natural specimens he can get his hands on. He mutters to himself, and takes notes furiously in a large, waterproof book.

From this point forward, these NPCs turn to the characters for direction. Aside from Urol, they are all completely out of their element and in need of guidance. While Amella and Tavey take this with some measure of calm, Avner is brutish and demanding the entire time. Urol is too fascinated by the surroundings to be frightened, and this absentmindedness could cause trouble later.

Preparing for the Journey

The *Sea Wyvern* is very heavily damaged and beyond repair at this time. Once the PCs reach Farshore, they can arrange a return to salvage more of the ship's cargo and repair the ship, returning her to a seaworthy state. For now, however, anyone with at least 5 ranks in Profession (sailor) can tell that there's nothing that can be done for the ship. This leaves the PCs with only one option—they must travel across the Isle of Dread on foot to reach Farshore. But before they can set off, they have a number of preparations to consider.

Where are we? The *Sea Wyvern* was on its way to Farshore when the crash occurred, stranding her crew on the northeastern shore of the Isle of Dread, as a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check



can determine. Without detailed maps of the isle, the party's only reliable source of information is Urol, whose knowledge and advice are vital to everyone's survival. Urol can quickly sketch out a map of the island (for a large, PC–friendly map, see *Dragon* #351) and points to their current location on the northeastern side of the island.

How do we get to Farshore? Once the characters know their location, they must plot an overland route to Farshore. Urol is giddy at this prospect and offers to plan a route that, while scenic, remains "quick and safe." After an hour, he presents his plan to take the group down through the small mountains to the south and along the bay toward the village of Tanaroa, the first of a number of native settlements that surround the colony. The journey to Tanaroa alone is approximately 130 miles. Urol estimates this journey will take approximately 10 days, taking into account the condition of the path and moving at his speed of 20. Avner prefers to ride his horse for this journey, but sullenly relents if it is made clear that the horse is needed to carry supplies.

What supplies do we need? The biggest concern for this journey ahead is food. A Medium creature requires a total of 10 pounds of rations for the ten-day journey. Small characters need only 3 pounds. Tavey, being young, needs only 5 pounds for the entire journey. Taking these factors into account, the NPCs need a total of 28 pounds of rations for the journey. Thunderstrike requries a total of 100 pounds of feed, but can carry up to 300 pounds and only be carrying a medium load. Urol assures the characters that he can find sufficient food to cut these weights in half throughout the journey, but Avner refuses to eat anything found in the wilds of the island. If you wish to add a bit of doubt to Urol's claims, he derides Avner's squeamishness about "eating local," and plucks a bright green soft-shelled crab from a nearby tidepool, saying, "See? There's delicious food all over this island!" As Urol pops the crab into his mouth, his eyes bulge and he immediately spits the thing out and is sick to his stomach for an hour.

Gathering up food and other gear from the shipwreck is not a simple task. Most of the cargo has sunk into the bay, but some has floated ashore. Scavenging on the beach requires a DC 10 Search check and takes 30 minutes per check. With a successful check the character finds 5 pounds of edible food, 10 pounds of feed, or one valuable tool (see the next section). For every 5 points by which the searcher beats the DC, another item or crate of food is recovered. Up to 30 pounds of food and 50 pounds of feed can be found in this manner. The ship's hold contains another 20 pounds of edible food and 30 pounds of feed. The *Sea Wyvern* is 200 feet off shore, and reaching her requires several DC 15 Swim checks. The NPCs are more than happy to help search the beach and can aid the PCs' Search checks there, but they never stray very far due to the threat of predators. The PCs can gather more food from the nearby jungle with a DC 10 Survival check, but the predators that hunt the jungle during the day make this risky.

Water is not much of a concern for the journey due to the frequent rains and abundance of streams across the island. In spite of this, Avner demands that they bring along some wine if any of his valuable bottles from the hold are found.

Scavenging the Sea Wyvern

The *Sea Wyvern* was carrying a host of supplies for the colony of Farshore. The following list of items can be found on the beach or in the hold of the *Sea Wyvern*. The DM should feel free to add items to this list, such as items belonging to the PCs. Much of the equipment listed here belonged to other crew members or was in the hold as cargo. Roll randomly or choose an item for each successful Search check.

Searching the *Sea Wyvern*

d%	Item Found
1–3	Heavy wooden shield
4–6	Suit of studded leather armor
7–8	Masterwork heavy crossbow
9–11	Quarterstaff
12–13	Masterwork trident
14–15	Cold iron dagger
16–17	Quiver with 20 arrows
18–19	Case with 10 crossbow bolts
20–23	100 feet of hemp rope
24–25	Case of 4 pints of lamp oil
26–27	Battered lantern
28–30	Fishing net
31–32	Tent
33–36	Two waterskins
37–38	Signal whistle
39–42	Saddle
43–45	Pair of saddlebags
46–47	Explorer's outfit
48–49	Noble's outfit.
50–75	50 pounds of food (5 pounds per check)
76–90	80 pounds of feed (10 pounds per check)
91–92	Small cask of ale
93–94	Case containing 4 bottles of fine wine
95–96	Small wooden case containing 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*
97–98	Scroll of *remove disease* in a watertight scroll tube
99–100	Scroll of *shrink item* in a watertight scroll tube

The First Night (EL 7)

When the PCs awake on the island, it is late morning. By the time they recover from their fight with the tyrannosaurus, form a plan, and gather supplies, it should be approaching dusk. Urol suggests beginning their journey the next morning so that they can reach the southern mountains to the south by nightfall rather than risk navigating the jungle at night. None of the NPCs wish to sleep in the jungle at night. Unfortunately, the beach is not incredibly large (the rest of the nearby coast is rocky), and the carcass of a dead dinosaur makes it a dangerous place to sleep. Unless the PCs find a way to rid themselves of the corpse, a trio of large flightless birds comes looking for a meal. If the PCs decide to move inland and sleep in the jungle, these three creatures instead stumble upon their camp.

Creatures: A trio of terror birds is drawn to the beach, attracted by the scent of dead tyrannosaurus. Terror birds stand nearly ten feet tall, and while flightless, their beaks and talons remain quite formidable. These predators approach the beach stealthily, and upon noticing other creatures, move to attack. While not very intelligent, terror birds do have a level of cunning that allows them to hunt as a group.

Terror Birds (3) **CR 4**

N Large animal

Fiend Folio 175

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 45 (7 HD)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d8+4) and 2 claws +6 (1d4+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +13

Atk Options improved grab (bite)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10

Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Hide)

Skills Hide +8, Move Silently +7

Improved Grab (Ex) A terror bird can only grab a creature at least two sizes smaller than itself, but can move at half speed while maintaining the hold without making a grapple check.

Tactics: The terror birds attempt to attack with surprise, using their Hide skill to move up undetected. Once within 100 feet, they charge, with two of the terror birds moving up against one target while the third charges the nearest Small creature and attempts to grapple him. If successful, the terror bird then tries to move away with the grappled creature the next round. The other two terror birds remain to fight for two rounds, giving their companion a chance to escape with their meal. Note that these terror birds are fiercer than others of their kind, and can attack with their powerful legs in addition to their bite.

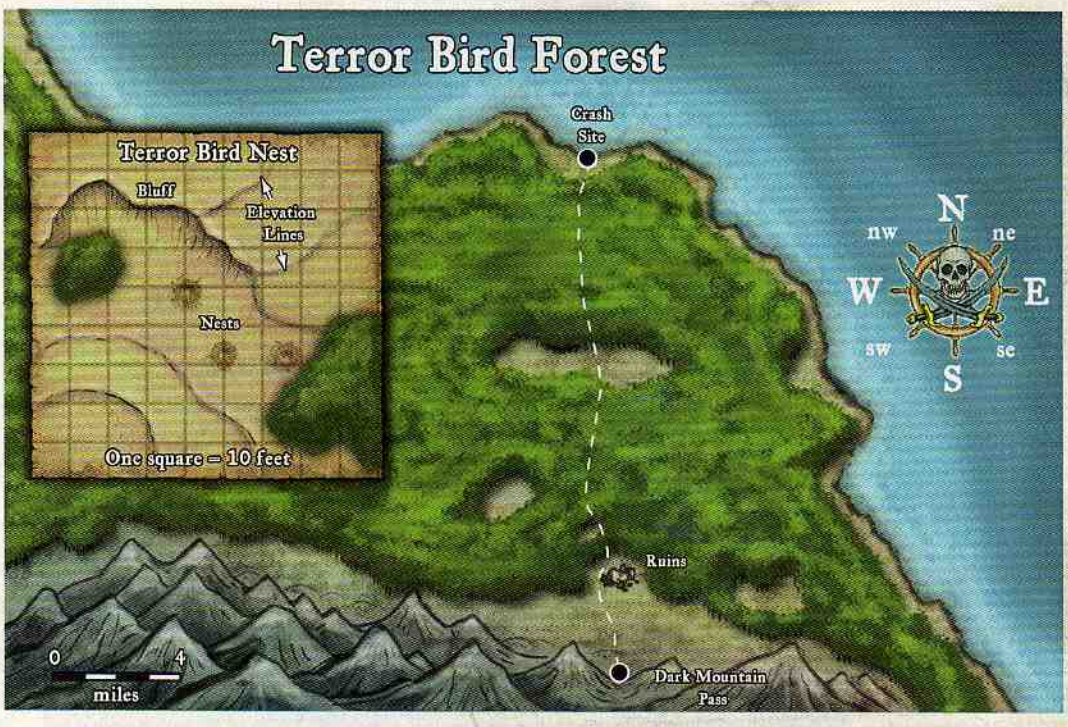
Journey to the Mountains

The journey from the beach to the southern mountains is a 13-mile trek through a stretch of jungle inhabited primarily by terror birds and dinosaurs. Fortunately, large game trails crisscross the expanse, making travel a bit easier (3/4 normal speed). The jungle consists of tall trees, flush with brightly colored birds and thick hanging vines. The canopy keeps the region shaded with occasional shafts of light. Terror birds hunt the floor of the jungle with some frequency. Every hour that the PCs travel, there is a 25% chance that they encounter a group of 1d4+1 terror birds. The PCs can avoid these predators with a DC 20 Survival skill check. Success at these checks each hour reduces the chance of encountering a pack of terror birds to 10%.

Hunting Birds (EL 6)

Roughly halfway through the light jungle, the PCs come upon a vast depression in the jungle that stretches nearly 6 miles across and 1 mile wide. A meteor struck the jungle here decades ago and the jungle has never reclaimed the broken ground. Today, the clearing is made up of rough ground, spattered with clumps of tall grasses and the occasional furrow. The crater is home to a herd of enormous dinosaurs known as diplodocuses, towering behemoths with elephantine bodies, long necks, and even longer tails. A dozen of the dinosaurs dwell in the crater, and although they often come to the crater's rim to feast on the plants that grow there, their size makes it a simple matter to avoid them.

Creatures: What won't be easy to avoid is a young diplodocus who has wandered too far from the herd and been attacked by a flock of six terror birds. The sudden onrush of dinosaur and bird gives the PCs 1d4 rounds to prepare before the beleaguered diplodocus crashes out of the undergrowth 50 feet from the PCs. The sight of the dinosaur being hounded and snapped at by "those horrid birds" fills Urol with rage, and he calls out for the



PCs to help the poor beast. The PCs can easily let this fleeing dinosaur pass them, taking its pursuers with it, but doing so may harm their relationship with Urol. The characters can instead move to help out the dinosaur by attacking the terror birds or at least slowing them down.

Young Diplodocus **CR 8**
N Huge animal
Dragon #318 64
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +12, Spot +13
AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14
hp 164 (16 HD)
Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6
Spd 20 ft.; Run
Melee tail slap +18 (2d6+12)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28
Special Actions tail sweep, trample 1d6+12
Abilities Str 27, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Run, Toughness (4)
Skills Listen +12, Spot +13
Tail Sweep (Ex) As a standard action, a young diplodocus can sweep a half circle with a radius of 20 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of the dinosaur's space. Any creatures smaller than the young diplodocus in the swept area takes 1d6+12 points of damage (Reflex DC 26 half). The save DC is Strength-based.
Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 26. The save DC is Strength-based.

Terror Birds (6): hp 45 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The terror birds move and attack the diplodocus each round until attacked by one of the PCs. The diplodocus moves its speed and takes a swing each round, provoking attacks of opportunity each time it moves. The terror birds avoid getting in front of the dinosaur so as to avoid its trample attack. Any PC that ends his move in front of the wounded dinosaur is subject to this attack. Once the terror birds have been drawn away, the diplodocus moves at its full speed to the east to return to his herd, leaving the PCs to deal with the angry birds.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience points for a CR 8 creature if the diplodocus escapes.

The Aranea's Nest (EL 6)

Toward the end of their first day of travel, the jungle begins to thin. Eventually, it opens up to reveal an area littered with ancient stone ruins. The mountains directly to the south are not particularly tall, and Urol points out that their best chance to find a pass lies in that direction.

The ruins themselves are Olman, dating from the time of their great empire on the isle long ago. Over the centuries, this small outpost has fallen into disrepair and decay, the jungle slowly overwhelming its crumbling walls. These ruins are infested with spiders, although those of the monstrous variety seem to avoid the PCs and skitter off into dark holes when they draw near. Spider webs caress the ruins, hanging between old walls and carpeting the floor. In a clearing in the center of the ruins resides a throne made of webs and bone. If the characters approach, they can make out the form of an old woman sitting on the throne, looking in their direction and beckoning them forward. The woman is Lithira, an outcast from the aranea colony located to the west.

Lithira is fascinated by the appearance of the PCs and has no intention of attacking them. In her humanoid form she wears a worn gown of black silk with cobwebs hanging from her bent form. As the characters approach, she calls out to them first in the ancient language of the Olman, and then in Sylvan. If she's unable to establish communication with the PCs, she grows suspicious and may attack them if they don't quickly leave. Fortunately, Urol speaks Sylvan and can function as a translator for the PCs if he's still alive.

Once communication is established, Lithira demands to know, "Who are you that has wandered into my web? You are not from this place. I have not seen your like in an age. I am Lithira, queen of these ruins. What brings you to my domain?"

Lithira is more curious than concerned about the appearance of outsiders here. Although aware of the native tribes and the colony of Farshore to the south, she knows little about them. After allowing the PCs to explain themselves, she goes on to ask them about the world beyond the island and what it is like. If the characters tell her a rousing tale of

their homeland, she listens with rapt attention and thanks them when they are done. She then tells the characters the following.

"I thank you for your tale. The world beyond sounds truly wondrous and I would very much like to visit it one day. As for your journey, there is little I can do to aid you. You should know that the way south is dangerous. There are unnatural things that lurk in the dark places, now more so than in the past. I know that four eyes have gazed upon you and their servant seeks you out. You would do well to avoid him.

"If you plan to head south, take the dark mountain pass that travels under the peaks. It was made by the ancient ones, but beware—hungry birds nest near its opening not far from here, and they are fierce near their young. May you wander the web to find your way home."

Lithira has little more information to offer the characters. She does not know the meaning of her premonitions, but she trusts them to be true. If asked about the "path under the mountain," she says it leads to the bay on the other side, but that she has not been that way in ages. She also explains that it is much easier than traveling around or over the mountains. She says nothing of the unnatural things that lurk in the dark places, except that they are numerous now and their power is growing.

When the characters are done, Lithira transforms into an old hairy spider and crawls away, allowing them to leave in peace. None of the NPCs wish to remain in this place any longer than they must, and urge the characters to lead them out immediately.

Should the PCs attack Lithira or her minions, they find themselves beset upon all sides by a hoard of spider swarms, four Small and three Medium monstrous spiders, and a pair of Large monstrous spiders. Lithira remains away from the fight if possible, lending aid with her spells.

Lithira, female aranea: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 15.

Spider Swarm: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 239.

Small Monstrous Spiders (4): hp 4 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

Medium Monstrous Spiders (3): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

Large Monstrous Spiders (2): hp 22 each; *Monster Manual* 289.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to establish a rapport with Lithira and receive her advice, grant them experience as if they had defeated a CR 7 creature in combat.

The Mother's Nest (EL 9)

The terror birds that scour the jungle for food nest in the southern foothills. One such nesting ground lies just 100 feet north of the entrance to the tunnel that leads under the mountains. If the players avoided the aranea ruins and do not know about the existence of the tunnel, they can discover the entrance to this underground pass though the mountains after 2d6 hours of

searching—feel free to have them encounter additional flocks of 1d4 terror birds every few hours. When they finally find the entrance to Dark Mountain Pass, they also find the mother's nest.

Creatures: The terror bird nesting ground has three occupied nests, one of which is watched over by a fifteen-foot-tall female. A fourth terror bird wanders the area, watching out for predators. If the PCs sneak up to the area, only this lookout bird has any chance of spotting them, as the others are busy tending to their nests.

NEST MOTHER
CR 7
Advanced elite terror bird
N Large animal
Fiend Folio 175
Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 110 (13 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +15 (2d6+7) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20
Atk Options improved grab (bite)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12
Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claws), Multiattack, Skill Focus (Hide)
Skills Hide +11, Move Silently +10

Improved Grab (Ex) A terror bird can only grab a creature at least two sizes smaller than itself, but can move at half speed while maintaining the hold without making a grapple check.

Terror Birds (3): hp 45 each; see page 33.

Tactics: These terror birds are extremely territorial and move to attack any perceived threat, including anyone spotted trying to enter the tunnel to the south of their nests. The terror birds swarm the nearest enemy and fight until slain. They do not coordinate their attacks effectively and split up if multiple foes appear. Should any of their eggs be damaged, they immediately turn their attention to the offender.

Lithira

Treasure: The terror birds keep little of value, but each of their nests has a cluster of three 1-foot-tall eggs. These eggs are worth 500 gp each to the right buyer, but they must be kept safe and warm for the rest of the journey. Urol dislikes killing the terror birds, but realizes the necessity. Once he finds the eggs, he desperately wants to take one with him. In addition, the nest of the largest terror bird contains the half-eaten corpse of an aranea. The carcass still wears a *cloak of Charisma* +2 that, while terribly soiled, functions perfectly well.

PART TWO: DARK MOUNTAIN PASS

During the Olman rule of the Isle of Dread, the city of Thanaclan was merely the largest of many architectural achievements. The Olmans built countless other structures throughout their isle—temples, fortresses, statues, and even several smaller towns. One such structure that survives to this day is a lengthy tunnel that runs under a ragged mountain of black stone and perilous cliffs. Known as Dark Mountain to the current natives of the isle, the tunnel that runs through its roots provides the most direct route of access between the northern jungle and the southern cliffs.

Dark Mountain Pass is 6 miles long and relatively straight. Portions of it are worked, whereas others are more natural. Assuming the party left the beach on the morning of their second day on the Isle of Dread, they should arrive at the pass entrance right around dusk and might wish to camp somewhere inside. Fortunately, no monsters dwell in the tunnel itself, and the terror birds do not venture inside unless chasing prey. Assuming the PCs move at a speed of 20 (Urol's walk speed), the tunnel only takes three hours to traverse. As they make their way, have the two characters in the back of the party make DC 20 Spot checks. Success indicates that they have the feeling that they are being watched, but no enemy appears yet. Halfway through the journey, the PCs hear the sounds of tumbling rocks behind them, but once again, no source is apparent.

The southern end of the pass consists of a small complex built by the Olman centuries ago to serve as an outpost. Unless otherwise noted, all of the chambers in this complex have 15-foot-high ceilings and are unlit. The walls and doors are all made of stone, decorated with bands of geometric designs and carvings of animals, all covered in mildew. The air is very dank and carries with it the smell of decay.

1. Reception Hall

The tunnel finally opens up into a large chamber shrouded in darkness. A small,

stagnant fountain lies directly opposite the entrance, while a stone throne sits on a dais at the far end of the room. A humanoid ribcage is pinned to the throne, held there by an ancient spear, while all around it lie the remainder of the poor soul's bones.

This large chamber was once used to allow guests to refresh themselves after the long walk through the tunnel. The ribcage pinned to the throne is that of the watcher who was stationed in this chamber when madness swept the island. He was killed by one of his fellows here in the complex. The bones crumble to dust if they are moved.

The fountain is 8 feet deep, but it is only half full of stagnant water. Anyone who drinks this tainted water must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer 1d2 points of Constitution damage. A red stone rod can be seen at the bottom of the pool with a DC 20 Search check. This rod weighs 8 pounds and is one of the keys necessary to open the great doors in area 5.

Treasure: The spear protruding from the ribcage is actually a +1 *longspear*. In addition, a simple necklace made of triangular gold plates worth 500 gp lies on the throne's seat.

2. Centipede Chasm (EL 8)

The stairs end at a broad platform overlooking a wide chasm. Two primitive stone statues flank the balcony, their impassive countenances caked with mildew. The chasm itself drops away into a black gulf of swirling water. Two bridges span the chasm, exiting the room through separate double doors on the far side.

The statues are harmless, made during the time of the Olmans. During the fall of their empire, insane tribesman hacked at the statues with greataxes. Although the mold and mildew covers up much of this superficial damage, it can still be seen with even casual observation.

The water below is only twenty feet deep, and supports a wide variety of fish that serve as the primary source of food for the two menaces that live herein. Numerous small submerged tunnels connect the water to the bay to the south, although they are impassable to anything of Tiny size or larger.

Creatures: This large chamber is the home of two Gargantuan centipedes who dwell up near the ceiling on an obscured niche, some 50 feet above the level of the platform. Once the characters have entered the chamber and begin to cross the bridges, the centipedes climb down to attack, one on each side.

Gargantuan Monstrous Centipedes (2): hp 66; *Monster Manual* 286.

Tactics: The centipedes crawl down the walls and attempt to bite the first creature they can reach. If they immobilize a character with their poison, a centipede grabs that foe and climbs back up the wall to enjoy its meal. The centipedes retreat to their lair at the top of the chamber if dropped to less than 10 hit points.

3. Mictlantecuhtli's Walk (EL 8)

The doors leading into this area from area 2 are stuck, requiring a DC 28 Strength check to open. Due to their size, up to three characters can assist on this check.

Deep niches are set into the walls of this ten-foot-wide corridor, each holding fragments of human skeletons caked in mold and fungus. Rusted metal collars and iron necklaces rest in each niche as well, and a few still retain fragments of crumbling burial shrouds. On spaces where no niches have been carved, intricate murals of a skeletal humanoid or hound, each wreathed in a long, coiling snake, decorate the walls.

The Olmans used this winding corridor as catacombs to inter their dead. Each spot marked on the map with niches actually represents six separate alcoves, carved one on top of another, for a total of about 200 bodies. Each skeleton is similarly attired, and with few exceptions, none hold anything of value. Disturbing any of the bodies or tampering with the wall that leads into area 4 causes the catacombs' three guardians to rise up and attack.

NPCs in Dark Mountain Pass

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Amella is not happy with the prospect of traveling underground, as she considers it unsafe. If anything goes wrong, she's is the first to say, "I told you so." If she's developed a romantic interest in a PC, she never strays far from that character's side.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is scared of the jungle after all of the terror birds, and is happy to travel a nice birdless tunnel. Throughout the long walk, he speaks only about the luck they might have in finding fresh food and more wine somewhere along the way.

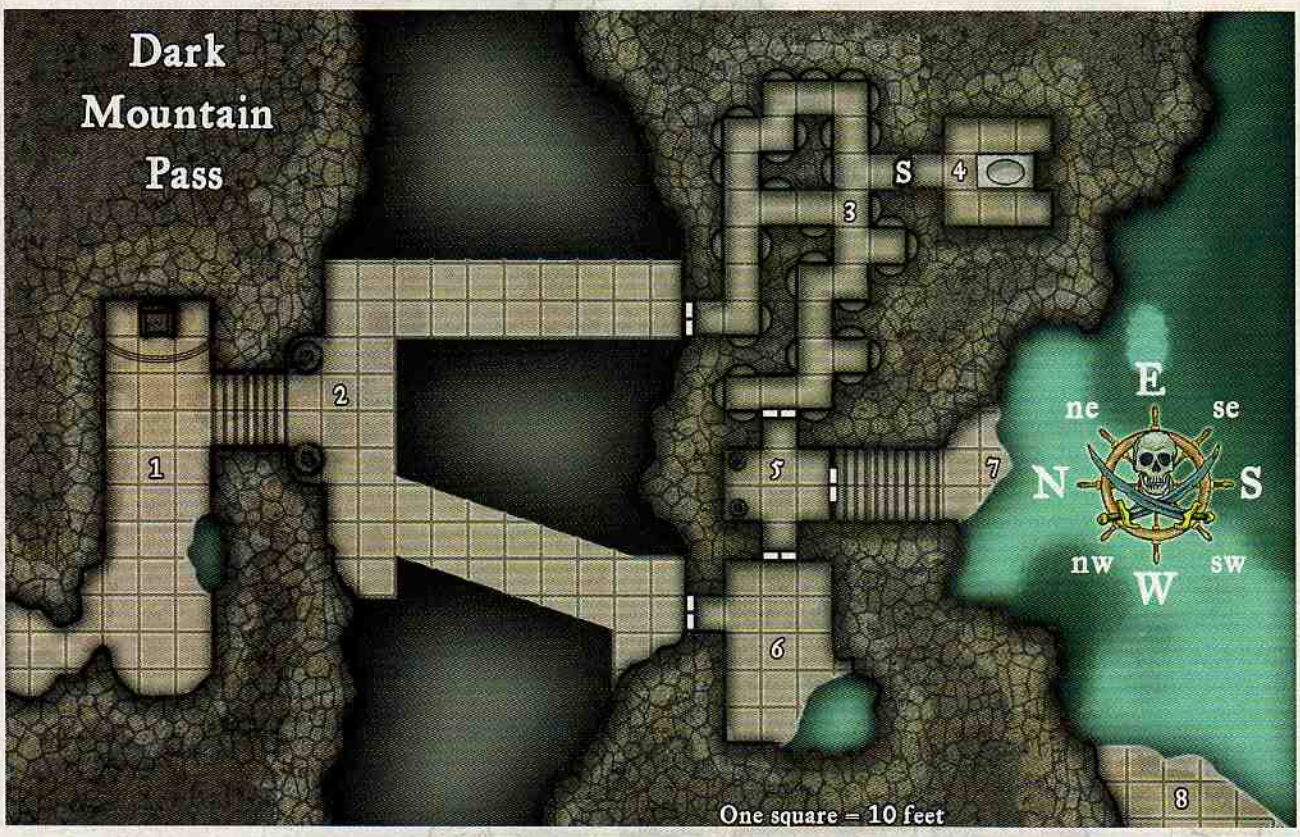
Tavey Nesk: Tavey, who had such excitement about becoming an adventurer like his PC hero, is uncomfortable and uneasy throughout the time spent in the tunnels. He tries desperately to cover up his fear so as to not be embarrassed in front of his idol.

Thunderstrike: Thunderstrike is nervous and easily spooked throughout this journey. Unless he can be calmed (DC 15 wild empathy check or DC 20 Handle Animal check), his constant clatter and neighing makes it very difficult to move silently through the complex.

Urol Forol: If the characters saved the diplodocus, Urol is on great terms with them despite what they might think of him. He continues to constantly evaluate and talk about the surroundings, taking numerous rubbings and doing sketches whenever possible. If the characters did not save the diplodocus, Urol is quiet and angry at them until he eventually demands an apology for the poor beast.

The secret door to area 4 can be discovered with a DC 22 Search check. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the skeletal dog and human as different representations of the Olman god of death and undeath, Mictlantecuhtli.

Creatures: The Olman placed three mummies in with the corpses to serve as their guardians. Once, these



mummies looked indistinguishable from the other bodies, but over time only these three undead have survived the decay of ages. These mummies are desiccated and preserved, but rather than being wrapped in strips of linen they wear tattered burial shrouds that hang from their bony frames like dusty cobwebs.

Mummies (3): hp 55 each; *Monster Manual* 190.

Tactics: Place the mummies at three random points throughout the catacombs. When anyone desecrates the dead or opens the secret door leading to area 4, they rise to attack together. The mummies all move toward the defilers and attack any living creature that comes within reach.

Treasure: Each one of the mummies wears a golden necklace around its rotting neck underneath its burial shroud. Each of these ancient necklaces are worth 500 gp each.

4. Teonahwanhi's Repose (EL 6)

This chamber is a small crypt dominated by a large stone sarcophagus. Both the walls of the room and the sarcophagus itself are covered in decorative patterns and carvings of animals. The top of the sarcophagus depicts a man dressed in robes, wearing a feathered headdress, and clutching a blue rod in one hand and a ceremonial dagger in the other.

The Olman shaman interred here was a man named Teonahwanhi. He blessed the creation of Dark Mountain Pass and volunteered to be buried alive within it order to appease the often fickle and capricious nature of their deities in hopes of ensuring the complex's safety and longevity. While Teonahwanhi himself is not an undead guardian, his resting place is far from undefended.

Trap: The lid of the coffin is trapped—any attempt to open it causes dozens of spears to shoot out of the floor throughout the room.

Floor Spear Trap: CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +15 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, spear); poison (greenblood oil, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con, 1d2 Con), multiple targets (1d6 spears per target in the room); Search DC 26, Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: Inside the sarcophagus rests Teonahwanhi's skeletal corpse. The long-dead shaman holds a blue stone rod in one hand and a masterwork silver dagger in the other. This rod weighs 8 pounds and is one of the keys necessary to open the great doors in area 5. Around his neck is a golden medallion inset with a shining pink *pearl of power* (3rd level).

5. Great Water Doors

Two gigantic iron doors stand closed to the south in this small chamber, decorated with symbols of water and sealife in tarnished copper. Opposite them are a pair of pedestals, each with a peculiar notch cut into the side. One of these pedestals is made from a dusky red granite, while the other is crafted of light blue marble.

Long ago, high tide brought the level of the bay nearly up to the doors of this place. As a defense, the Olman built these large water doors, designed to automatically close at high tide. The mechanism broke down many hundreds of years ago, locking the doors closed. In case of just such an emergency, the Olman installed

the two pillars, one blue and one red. Each has a corresponding rod hidden nearby that, when inserted simultaneously, could be used to rotate the pillars clockwise to manually open the doors. These rods are located in the fountain in area 1 and the sarcophagus in area 4.

Water Doors: 4-foot-thick iron and stone; Hardness 10; hp 1,440; Break DC 50.

6. Stagnant Pool (EL 7)

The doors leading into this area from the west are stuck, requiring a DC 28 Strength check to open. Due to their size, up to three characters can assist on this check.

One corner of this chamber has completely crumbled away to reveal a stagnant pool of water, its surface calm, dark, and mysterious.

This room was once a dining hall, but over time a leak from the stone above caused the subsidence in the southwest corner. Now, little is left aside from crumbling stones and shards of a rotted table. The room's sole inhabitant, a black pudding, has devoured most of the other furnishings and now hides in the pool.

Creature: The pudding waits until it senses motion within 10 feet of the fountain to attack, reaching out to strike with an acidic pseudopod. The black pudding is mindless and attacks the PCs until it is destroyed.

Black Pudding: hp 115; *Monster Manual* 201.

7. The Bay (EL 7)

The doors open with a screech of protest, flooding the chamber with fresh salt air from the world outside. Beyond the doors is a broad set of seaweed-choked stairs that leads down to a small beach.

Once through the doors, the characters emerge into the sunlit world again. During low tide, the area indicated as shallow water lies just above sea-level, leaving deep tide pools to the left and right.

Creatures: A trio of Large monstrous crabs dwell in the water here. The crabs are always hungry and attack the PCs the moment they enter the water.

Large Monstrous Crabs (3) **CR 4**

N Large vermin (aquatic)
Stormwrack 142
Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +0, Spot +4

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18
hp 36 (6 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 20 ft.
Melee 2 claws +8 (1d8+5)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +17
Atk Options constrict 2d8+5, improved grab (claw)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 11, Con 12, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2
SQ amphibious
Feats Toughness
Skills Hide +0, Move Silently +4

Tactics: The water of the bay has two depths. The shallow areas are only 5 feet deep, meaning that half of each crab sticks out of the water when they are in these areas during high tide (giving them cover from those out of the water). The deep areas are 15 feet deep, giving the crabs total cover when they are in these areas. Medium or smaller creatures must swim to move through the deep areas. They can move through the shallow areas without making swim checks, but each square of movement costs 2 squares. Small (and smaller) creatures must swim in shallow water.

Development: If the crabs are killed and cooked, 30 pounds of food can be recovered from each.

8. Cliffside Path

The land here rises up away from the water, eventually forming a winding cliffside path roughly 80 feet above. Although the ramp is relatively steep, Thunderstrike and the rest of the party can easily traverse it.

PART THREE: CLIFFS OF DREAD

Leaving Dark Mountain Pass behind, the party must now navigate the eastern shore of the Isle of Dread, moving along a winding path that at times takes them nearly 100 feet above the waters below, and at others it descends back to sea level to traverse stretches of rocky beach. Originally carved from the cliff over 1,000 years ago by the Olmans, time and erosion have taken their toll on this once-majestic seaside byway. In places, it has eroded to less than ten feet in width, although it's never narrow enough that the party and a nervous horse can't navigate it in relative safety.

Several times in the recent past, adventurous and industrious Olmans from the southern villages attempted to establish new homes along this stretch of land. The mountains provide an excellent natural barrier from the savage monsters that dwell on the mainland, and the fishing in this bay is particularly fine. As the PCs travel south, they encounter many traces of these recent settlements—empty outrigger canoes beached on the rocks, sections of walkway that have been repaired or reinforced with wooden supports where erosion has washed away the stone, and now and then even small collections of beachside huts. Investigations of these sites reveals that they are all uninhabited. The canoes rot in the tides and are completely unseaworthy, repairs to the cliffside paths are dubious and look unsafe, and the huts themselves have often partially collapsed or become nesting grounds for loud and angry gulls.

Alas, while this stretch of land is indeed sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that dwell on the mainland, it is far from safe. Not long after the Olmans attempted to settle this stretch of land, the lights of their fires attracted unwanted attention. The gargoyle tribes of the peninsula across the bay soon came to investigate, and found those who dwelt here to be an excellent source of food. At first, the gargoyle attacks were isolated, and the warriors of the tribes were able to drive them off. As the months wore on, however, the gargoyles grew more aggressive, until finally a full-scale invasion from the sky struck the Olmans in the dead of night. When the sun rose, the beach was deserted once again.

Yet the gargoyles have learned that prey often travels this coast, and not

NPCs on the Cliffs

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Thrilled to be out of the caves and at least near the water again, Amella has high spirits toward everyone except Urol, who has really begun to annoy her with his incessant chatter. At some point along the journey, she explodes and flies into a litany of curses and profanity directed at Urol, who has himself finally had enough of Amella's mean-spirited comments. If the PCs don't intervene, the two could come to blows.

Avner Meravanchi: Once mishaps start to occur and the gargoyles attack, Avner's complaints reach a new height. He demands that the characters take care of these problems, and may try to convince the other NPCs to hole up with him in a small cave while the PCs go on to get help. He eats more than his share of rations whenever possible, figuring that he has earned it.

Tavey Nesk: Tavey returns to his fun-loving self once out of the caves. He uses the cliffs as an opportunity to impress his hero with acts of acrobatics and displays of climbing and jumping skills. Tavey runs a 20% chance each day of taking a 50-foot fall (DC 12 Reflex negates). A PC can convince him to cease his dangerous behavior with a DC 20 Diplomacy or successful Intimidate check (Tavey's hero gains a +5 bonus on these checks).

Thunderstrike: Thunderstrike is nervous and easily spooked throughout this entire journey. There's a 20% chance each day that the skittish horse missteps along the cliff face and must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid taking a 50-foot fall onto the rocks below. A DC 15 wild empathy or a DC 20 Handle Animal check negates this chance by calming the horse's nerves.

Urol Forol: Urol remembers hearing about the gargoyles and their aerie across the bay after the first attack. He knows little about them, but has heard rumors that they are a good-sized tribe. Urol is truly puzzled and worried about the mishaps that continue to befall the party. He is at a loss as to their cause.

long after the PCs arrive, they attract unwanted attention from the skies.

The Route South

Urol estimates that it should take the group roughly 6 days to traverse the beaches and cliffs south. He views the presence of the ancient roadway as a surprise bonus, and points out that anything that's stood the test of centuries is likely to be safe enough to trust for travel. If the PCs wish to avoid taking the ancient cliffside road, their travel time south triples as they are often forced to navigate deep tide pools and narrow beaches. As with elsewhere on the island, the frequent rains make gathering fresh water an easy task, but gathering food along the cliffs is more difficult. With the exception of the plentiful fish in the bay, the only animal life along these cliffs are flocks of wily and bitter-tasting sea gulls. If the PCs have fishing equipment, Survival checks made along this route to get along in the wild can be made at no penalty. Otherwise, these checks suffer a –5 penalty to each roll.

Mishaps and Malevolence

Unbeknownst to the party at this time, they have attracted the attention of more than just gargoyles. Those PCs who noted the feeling of being followed in Dark Mountain Pass were the first to feel this sinister presence, but here on the cliffs it becomes truly malevolent. And the further south they travel, the worse things become.

The source of this evil is a wretched and hateful simian demon named Olangru, an outcast bar-lgura tanar'ri. Once a scout for the sinister forces that hold the Isle of Dread's central plateau in their grip, Olangru's failure would have resulted in his execution had he not managed to flee with a few of his mates south into the trackless jungles. Olangru eventually discovered a hidden shrine to Demogorgon on the banks of Bloodwater Lake, and hopes that by bringing enough sacrifices to this shrine he can restore his favor with the Prince of Demons.

Olangru recieved a vision the night the PCs crashed on the Isle of Dread, a vision he believes was granted him by Demogorgon. (Of course, the actual source of the vision was Malcanthet, the Queen of Succubi, who has decided to use Olangru as another pawn to draw the PCs further into her plot against Demogorgon—she hopes that by forcing a confrontation between the PCs and Olangru she can plant the seeds of hatred for the Prince of Demons in their souls.) Olangru traveled north to intercept the PCs, but only caught their trail once they went into Dark Mountain Pass. He has been following them at a safe distance ever since, content to let them head toward his temple, where he hopes to sacrifice them to Demogorgon.

Now that the PCs have reached the cliffs, the fiend plans to take a more active roll in guiding the party, satisfying his cruel need to cause pain and fear in mortals. Until that time, use the following mishaps and odd occurrences to instill a sense of dread in the players. Each one of these minor events occurs only once, and even then no more than two should occur on any given day.

Always Watching: One night, give each PC on watch a DC 15 Spot or Listen check to sense a presence out in the dark, just beyond their range of observation. Twice during the night, the entire camp falls into magical *darkness* that lasts for one hour. The bar-lgura pulls off this trick by teleporting above their camp and dropping a small pebble with *darkness* cast on it.

Carcasses Outside Camp: The PCs wake in the morning to find a dozen bird carcasses arranged just outside the light range of their camp. Each bird is tied, wings outstretched and head to the ground, on an X-shaped frame. Although the birds appear to have been dead for days, they were certainly not there the day before. Olangru placed these carcasses using *telekinesis*.

Missing Supplies: A pack of food goes missing, reducing the group's food supply by 1 day. No one knows where the food went, but everyone is quick to blame Avner Meravanchi. The bar-lgura used *telekenesis* to remove the pack at night while the party was distracted.

Skull Slide: A small rockslide falls onto the group, dealing 1d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 12 negates). Mixed in among the rocks are a number of

human skulls. This rockslide is caused by the bar-lgura high above (the skulls are from his personal collection—he's confident he can collect replacements soon enough).

Suicidal Native: The group spies a native up ahead standing on the cliff's edge, but as they approach, he stabs himself in the chest with a dagger and flings himself into the bay. By the time the characters reach that spot, no trace of the native can be found. Olangru created this illusory native using *major image*.

A. Gargoyle Ambush (EL 8)

This location is approximately 24 miles from the Dark Mountain Pass exit. The party will need to make camp at least once before reaching this spot, unless they have some way of moving incredibly quickly. In any event, the gargoyles catch their scent at this point along their journey.

Creatures: Four gargoyles roost in this area, hiding on small ledges above the path (two on each). These sadistic monsters are scouts from the colony that roosts on the other side of the bay, and have been charged with patrolling these cliffs for new prey. They view this area as theirs and attack any intruders on sight. Unlike most gargoyles, these creatures do not have a gothic look, but instead have a more feral countenance and often have geometric patterns similar to Olman hieroglyphic writing etched into their form.

Gargoyles (4): hp 37 each; *Monster Manual* 113.

Tactics: The gargoyles swoop down from above to engage the party. Once in melee, they make full attacks whenever able and attempt to bull rush Small targets off the cliff face if the opportunity presents itself. Anyone who falls off the cliff either lands on a ledge 20 feet below, taking 2d6 points of falling damage, or in the water 80 feet below, taking 2d3 points of nonlethal damage and 4d6 points of lethal damage. The water below is very deep and choppy, requiring DC 15 Swim checks to stay afloat.

If three of the gargoyles are defeated, the fourth attempts to flee to report the attack to its kin across the bay.

B. Unsafe Lift (EL 6)

Up ahead, the path comes to an abrupt end, looking out over the bay. Nearly sixty feet above, it continues along its southern route. A bamboo platform hangs near the upper path's edge, suspended by several vines draped over a log driven into the cliff face above. The other ends of the vines hang down the cliff face and are attached to a second log at waist height on the lower ledge. Down below, a dozen or so abandoned huts line a wide but rocky beach.

The Olmans who recently attempted to settle along this stretch of coastline built this crude lift to allow them quick access to the ledges above. The system is as ingenious as it is primitive, using crude pulleys to allow several characters (or a beast of burden) to pull on the vines to raise or lower the lift between the two ledges and the beach below.

The beach below ends just to the south of the lift at a stretch of cliffs that plunge directly into the sea for nearly two miles—the easiest route onward is to continue along the ledge. In order to do so, though, the PCs and their allies must first reach the upper ledge. Spells like *fly* and *levitate* offer the easiest options, but for groups without them, the cliff can be climbed with a series of DC 20 Climb checks. The upper level is 60 feet above, making it a total of 140 feet above the water of the bay. Anyone falling into the water ignores 20 feet, takes 2d3 points of nonlethal damage for the next 20 feet, and takes 1d6 points of lethal damage for every additional 10 feet above that.

Of course, the PCs can also use the lift. Great care must be taken when releasing the lift, as its weight causes it to descend very rapidly. Moving the empty lift at a safe speed of 10 feet requires a DC 10 Strength check. Moving the lift once it's loaded increases this DC by 2 for every Small creature, by 5 for every Medium creature, and by 10 for every Large creature; the lift itself has a space of 10 feet. Several people can assist in these checks. Failing this check by less than 5 results in no progress, while failing it by 5 or more causes the lift to careen down to smash onto the tide pools below. Anyone on the lift when it falls takes 1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet fallen.

Trap: Olangru has cleverly sabotaged the lift by cutting partway through some

Perils of Homemade Boats

It's possible that the PCs might try to rig together a raft or repair canoes found along these cliffs. Unfortunately, this route is not only time consuming, but in the end is quite a bit more dangerous than the land-based route south. Urol, Avner, and even Amella advise against such a plan if the PCs bring it up.

Most of the canoes and ruined huts have rotted to the point of uselessness, but a dedicated group could scavenge enough supplies to build a five-foot-section of raft. The lift from area **B** is a special case; it could be used to build a ten-foot-section. Building a crude raft requires a DC 5 Craft (boatbuilding) check, while repairing or building a canoe requires a DC 10 Craft (boatbuilding) check. A crude raft's effective gp cost for purposes of determining how long it takes to craft is 50 gp—it'll take a few days and a lot of help to build a working raft. During this time, feel free to have monsters attack the PCs (such as groups of 1d4+1 monstrous crabs or gargoyles) 2–3 times a day.

Once the PCs set out to sea, the peril only increases. The waters around the Isle of Dread are rife with monsters that might ignore larger vessels, but are intrigued by the presence of smaller ones. Creatures like elasmosauruses, Large sharks, giant octopi, or enormous sea snakes (use the stats for huge vipers but give them the aquatic subtype) should hound the PCs often on their voyage.

Of course, if the PCs seem determined to reach Farshore via raft, you should let them succeed (providing they survive the monster attacks). In this case, they bypass Part Four of this adventure entirely... for now. You can certainly have them run afoul of the bar-lgura Olangru at any point during the next adventure if they don't encounter the demon during this one.

of the vines that support it. The moment more than one Medium creature steps onto the lift one of the vines snaps, causing the lift to tilt wildly to one side. Any creature on the lift at this time must make a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid being pitched off the lift. One round later, the remaining vines snap and the entire thing falls into the shallow tide pools below. A *make whole* spell can repair the damaged vines before they break.

Sabotaged Lift: CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; variable fall; multiple targets (everyone on the lift); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 15.

C. Quotoctoa's Wrath (EL 9)

This area is about 10 miles beyond the sabotaged lift (area **B**). After learning of the loss of some of its members in the previous ambush (either from the report of a gargoyle that escaped, or by the simple fact that the patrol from area A never returned to report), a gargoyle chieftain named Quotoctoa assembles a warband of his best warriors to seek out and slay the intruders. The group discovers the PCs at this location and attacks them without pause.

Creatures: Led by Quotoctoa, a fierce gargoyle barbarian, this host of angry gargoyles is bent upon the destruction of the characters. The gargoyles do not bother setting up an ambush, so there is no chance of surprise.

QUOTOCTOA **CR 7**

Male gargoyle barbarian 3
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 113
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Terran

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20; uncanny dodge
hp 72 (7 HD); **DR** 10/magic and 5/adamantine
Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Spd 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee 2 claws +9 (1d4+6) and bite +7 (1d6+4) and gore +7 (1d6+4)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, rage 1/day
*2-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 4
SQ fast movement, freeze, illiteracy, trap sense +1
Feats Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Hide +9 (+17 near stone), Intimidate +0, Listen +5, Spot +5
Possessions *bracers of armor +2, gargoyle crown*, 10 gold rings (each worth 50 gp)

Rage (Ex) When raging, Quotoctoa's statistics change as follows:
hp 86
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18
Fort +11, **Will** +8
Melee 2 claws +11 (1d4+8) and bite +9 (1d6+5) and gore +9 (1d6+5)
Grp +13
Abilities Str 23, Con 24

Gargoyles (3): hp 37 each; *Monster Manual* 113.

Tactics: The gargoyles use their superior mobility to swarm the party, landing in and among the PCs to set up flanking opportunities. Meanwhile, Quotoctoa lands near the most powerful-looking character, goes into a rage, and attacks using Power Attack and his smite ability granted from his *gargoyle crown* at the first chance. Given the opportunity, Quotoctoa uses Improved Bull Rush to push foes off the cliff, causing them to take 6d6 falling damage and 2d3 nonlethal damage as they plummet into the water 100 feet below.

D. The Trail Turns Inward

After the fight with the gargoyle tribe, the path continues onward for 18 miles before reaching a narrow mountain pass that leads to the interior of the island. Urol looks at this path, and marks it on his map, but urges the group to continue onward toward the coast to reach Tanaroa. Avner, meanwhile, suggests that the group take the path to avoid any further attacks from gargoyles. If the party heads inland, continue on with Part Four. If the party instead decides to continue on the cliffs, they find that their route comes to an end soon thereafter. Whether the elements have eroded the ledge away completely or the ancients simply never completed its construction is unclear, but the only way onward is to backtrack to the pass and head into the isle's interior.

PART FOUR: FOGMIRE

The mountain pass is a 10-mile journey through twisting canyons of rock. There are plenty of places to stop and rest along this path, and both food and water are more plentiful than they were along the cliffs. When the mountain pass finally comes to an end, the PCs find themselves on the edge of a great and dark fog-shrouded jungle. A lake glitters far off in the distance, barely visible through the gloom.

The path the PCs are on leads right into the mysterious jungle. Leaves drip with condensation, and the canopy above sings with strange bird calls. An inordinate number of small serpents make their home on the jungle floor, but they avoid the PCs whenever possible. While the undergrowth is relatively light, the ground is wet and muddy, verging on swampland in places. The PCs can easily turn south to continue their journey straight to Tanaroa, following game trails that wander through the woods. Or so they think. For as they continue to wander, things grow strange indeed.

The PCs have entered a mysterious region of the Isle of Dread called Fogmire, a place where Demogorgon's fell influence is strong. The boundaries between the Material Plane and the wretched jungles of Gaping Maw's islands on the Abyss are thin here, and the taint of that foul realm bleeds through to influence the plants and animals. Although there is plenty of food in Fogmire, many of the animals and plants in the swampy jungle are deformed, off-color, or bloated with twitching growths. While they taste horrible, they are edible. The water has an off taste about it as well, but it, too, is safe to consume. The trees are twisted and deformed in some places, while others sport large tumors that leak pale green ooze. The fog that shrouds this jungle is ever-present and limits visibility to 60 feet, making navigation difficult. It's a DC 25 Survival check to avoid becoming lost in Fogmire. Yet for all the ominous signs and portents, nothing attacks the PCs during their initial intrusion into Fogmire. It's almost as if the beasts of the island avoid this lonely stretch of land entirely.

Gargoyle Crown

The wizards of ancient Thanaclan crafted several dozen of these crowns as rewards for those gargoyle minions who served them well. Over the centuries, most of the gargoyle crowns have been destroyed or lost, but a few remain here and there, often in the possession of the descendants of those original favored gargoyle minions.

Crafted from pieces of carefully carved granite, a *gargoyle crown* features three sharp points in the front with a series of small points ringing the rest of the wearer's head. The crown has two primary powers. Once per day as a free action, the crown can be activated to give the wearer DR 5/adamantine for 10 minutes, giving his skin the appearance of stone. The crown also grants its wearer a special smite attack usable once per day against creatures touching natural stone or earth. The wearer gains a +4 bonus on attack and damage rolls when using this special strike. The wearer must declare he is using this ability before making the attack. This item takes up the hat body slot when worn.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *stoneskin, true strike*; Price 14,000 gp; Weight 4 lb.

The Fogmire Ruins

After the PCs have spent several hours in Fogmire, perhaps as they begin scouting for a safe place to camp, they come upon some old ruins in a relatively dry clearing in the jungle. Made up of crumbling, moss-covered walls, these ruins appear ancient but do not feature the Olmans' architectural style. Built out of simple stone blocks, the walls bear no designs or patterns. Small piles of rubble dot the ruins, and an empty fire pit sits in the center.

Off in the northwest corner of the ruins stands a crude wooden frame in the shape of an "X." Bound upside-down to this frame is the corpse of an Olman man, his legs high in the air. Even from

Sleeping in Fogmire

The Abyssal influence of Fogmire manipulates the dreaming mind—any character that sleeps in Fogmire must make a DC 14 Will save or take 2 points of Wisdom damage as terrible visions of a demon-haunted jungle and ocean plague them. These are visions of Demogorgon's Abyssal realm of Gaping Maw. A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom by this effect falls into a permanent nightmare coma, and without aid from allies, will eventually die of thirst if the bar-lguras of Fogmire don't get to him first.

Creatures that do not sleep (such as elves) cannot be affected by this effect.

afar, it's easy to tell that the gaping wound in the center of his chest killed the man. When the party approaches to within 10 feet of the corpse, it suddenly begins to speak in broken Common.

"Welcome to my home, travelers. You come a long way only to stay here forever. At least you live. That is good for now. My home is your home, now and forever."

The corpse is a simple human zombie (*Monster Manual* 266) given the power to speak through foul magic. He cannot remove himself from the cross and does not attack even if he is cut down or assaulted. The corpse has little information and always speaks in dour tones, predicting the characters' oncoming doom. If asked, he identifies himself as Golnura, but he does not know where he is from or how long he has been here. He does know that the master of Fogmire killed him, but he refuses to describe him.

This talking zombie was placed here by Olangru as a tool to taunt intruders into his realm. The undead creature always asks about what it is like to be alive, often commenting that soon the PCs will know what it is like to be dead. The zombie is easily destroyed and does not attempt to defend himself.

If the PCs leave the old ruins and attempt to find their way back out, they find the path winds quite a bit as they leave the place. The baleful influence of Gaping Maw warps reality in Fogmire, and those who stumble into this dreadful section of jungle find it very difficult to escape. Any attempt to wander away from the old ruins results in the PCs finding themselves arriving at the old ruins from the opposite side 1d4 hours later, as if they'd traveled in a circle. Fogmire is, in a sense, a dimensional "ant-lion trap," and as long as the focus of this trap exists (the Lemorian golem in the shrine of Demogorgon), physical travel won't allow escape from Fogmire. Even flight fails; the fog seems to go on forever, and even if a character tries to fly straight up, he finds that at some point along his flight he's arched back toward the ground, directed by powerful forces beyond his control. Spells like *teleport* and *plane shift* could allow escape, but for now these spells are likely beyond the PCs' reach.

The Chosen of Olangru (EL 7)

Olangru and his mates are the rulers of Fogmire, and they know its hidden paths by their black hearts. Soon after the PCs arrive in the cursed jungle, the bar-lguras follow them at a safe distance and wait for an opportune chance to strike. Although their primary objective it to cause a bit of terror, they also plan to abduct one of the group to take back to their temple to be sacrificed to Demogorgon. The best point for this event to occur is when the PCs bed down for the night, but if they're about to discover the location of the shrine of Demogorgon, the demons strike just before they do so.

When the time is right, Olangru and his two mates become invisible and teleport into the party's midst from his vantage point sixty feet away. Give any characters on watch a Listen check opposed by the bar-lguras' Move Silently checks to notice their arrival. Those that fail are surprised (sleeping characters are automatically surprised).

Creatures: This initial combat should be fairly short—Olangru and his mates wish only to abduct one of the intruders. If he still lives, Urol is the primary target—otherwise you should select one of the other NPCs as the victim. Note that despite the challenge of this encounter, the EL is reduced due to the circumstances noted below under Tactics.

Bar-lguras are hulking demons that look at first like powerfully muscled orangutans, yet the cruelty that burns in their rheumy red eyes signals a hateful intelligance. They have enormous, tusk-like fangs, six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot.

OLANGRU **CR 9**

Bar-lgura scout 4

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29, *Complete Adventurer* 10

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 27; Dodge, Mobility, skirmish (+1 AC), uncanny dodge

hp 95 (10 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20

Fort +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +8

Spd 50 ft., climb 20 ft.; Run

Melee* 2 claws +15 (1d6+10) and bite +10 (1d6+6)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +17

Atk Options Power Attack, Spring Attack, pounce, skirmish (+1d6)

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Combat Gear *ring of the ram* (25 charges)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 14), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (DC 20), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 18)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 14), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 16)

*2-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 22, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ battle fortitude (+1), fast movement, trackless step, trapfinding

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Run, Spring Attack

Skills Balance +21, Climb +29, Hide +23, Intimidate +16, Jump +33, Listen +14, Move Silently +19, Spot +14, Tumble +21

Possessions combat gear, *bracers of armor +2*, *boots of levitation*, *cloak of resistance +1*

Abduction (Su) A bar-lgura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Battle Fortitude (Ex) At 2nd level, a scout gains a +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves and initiative checks. A scout looses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Pounce (Ex) If a bar-lgura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Skirmish (Ex) A 3rd-level scout deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks and a +1 competence bonus to Armor Class during any round in which he moves at least 10 feet. The extra damage applies only to attacks taken during the scout's turn, and only against living creatures that have a discernible anatomy. Undead, constructs, oozes, plants, incorporeal creatures, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are not vulnerable to this additional damage. The scout must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a

NPCs in Fogmire

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Amella quickly becomes depressed again once the group leaves sight of the sea, and loudly blames Urol for their troubles when they become lost in the jungle. When Urol is abducted, Amella's attitude toward the gnome changes. Horrified by the simian demons, she can't stomach the thought of leaving anyone, even "that ridiculous gnome," behind for them to torment, eat, or worse. She encourages the PCs to find him and rescue him, and if she's in an ongoing relationship with one of the PCs, may even demand to accompany them into the Shrine of Demogorgon once it's discovered.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is thrilled to be away from the gargoyles, but quickly becomes quite disgusted with (and frightened of) Fogmire. He does not care that Urol has been taken and demands the PCs find some way to get them out of this situation; "Maybe the time those weird apes take with the gnome'll give us a chance to escape!"

Thunderstrike: If Thunderstrike is still alive at this time, the prize horse attempts to bolt into the jungle whenever he gets a chance; a DC 15 wild empathy or DC 20 Handle Animal check, made daily, prevents this; otherwise Olangru finds the horse soon enough and tears it apart.

Tavey Nesk: Tavey is terrified of Fogmire, and takes to constantly asking the hero what he can do to help and when they will get to leave. Tavey offers to help the group find Urol until they come to the entrance to the shrine, when his nerve fails.

Urol Forol: Urol becomes quite weary of Fogmire upon entering it. After a few hours, he continues to look at the plants and animals, commenting on how "none of this is right..." When Urol is abducted, he does so screaming and calling out for the characters to save him.

vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. Scouts can apply this extra damage to ranged attacks made while skirmishing, but only if the target is within 30 feet. A scout looses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor and when carrying a medium or heavy load.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a bar-lgura can attempt to summon another bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 10th).

Skills A bar-lgura gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks and a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

OLANGRU'S MATES (2) **CR 5**

Female bar-lguras

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility

hp 51 (6 HD); DR 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Run

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6+6) and bite +7 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +12

Atk Options pounce

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 12), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (DC 18), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 16)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 12), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 14)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Run

Skills Balance +15, Climb +23, Hide +17, Intimidate +10, Jump +27, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Spot +11, Tumble +15

Possessions *bracers of armor +1*

Abduction (Su) A bar-lgura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 18 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Pounce (Ex) If a bar-lgura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a bar-lgura can attempt to summon another bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Skills A bar-lgura gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks and a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

Tactics: Olangru appears at the north entrance to the old ruins, near the corpse of Golnura. During the surprise round, he charges the nearest PC and attacks using his pounce and skirmish abilities. On the first round of combat, two of his three bar-lgura mates appear, one coming from the southeast path and another coming from the west. The one closest

to Urol moves right up to him, using Tumble if needed, and teleports him away using its abduction ability. That bar-lgura does not return to the fight.

Olangru frequently draws attacks of opportunity during the battle, charging from one opponent to the next while making use of his pounce and skirmish abilities. Once Urol is abducted, he and his remaining mate teleport away.

Developments: After Olangru and his mates teleport away, the characters have a chance to take stock of the situation. Urol is gone, leaving behind his animal companion, Miss Crazzle. The crow hastily looks about for the missing gnome and then proceeds to annoy the PCs with squawks and pecks, as if to say, "Where did my friend go?" The remaining NPCs panic over the situation and fall into a state of despair, seeing no way out of the situation and assuming that one of them will be taken next.

The Shrine to Demogorgon

There is no indication where the bar-lgura went with Urol and no trail to track—the method of abduction leaves behind no clues. Fortunately for Urol, Olangru has no plans to immediately sacrifice him—the bar-lugra intends to wait for the proper moment to make the sacrifice, when the fluctuating barriers between the Material Plane and Gaping Maw are at their thinnest.

The party has few options at this point. They cannot escape from the jungle and a terrible demon is stalking them and abducting their members. If they do nothing, Olangru's attacks continue, abducting one NPC every few nights until he finally begins taking PCs. It's possible that Olangru might be slain in one of these fights, in which case the abduction attempts cease but the sinister curse of Fogmire persists.

Fortunately for the PCs, the fact that the Lemorian golem (see Appendix Two) functions as a focus for Fogmire's curse also makes it fairly easy to locate. *Detect evil* and *detect chaos* both reveal faint auras infusing the plants, animals, and even the ground and the air in Fogmire. A DC 15 Search check reveals what appear to be writhing "currents" in these auras, currents that all flow in the same direction. By tracking these currents, the PCs will soon enough come to the entrance to the Shrine to Demogorgon, at which point the background levels of chaos and evil rise to moderate and overwhelm the currents. It should be obvious that this is the epicenter of the Abyssal influence in Fogmire.

Other divination spells can guide the PCs. A *divination* might reveal that "the rivers of evil and tides of chaos point the way," while *locate creature* or *locate object* used on Urol or any of his belongings might work as well if the spells are cast in the vicinity of the old ruins. The entrance to the shrine to Demogorgon is just under 500 feet into the jungle to the north of the old ruins, so as long as these spells are cast at caster level 8th or higher, the shrine itself (and by extension, Urol and his gear) are in range.

Even parties that lack divination spellcasting capabilities receive hints once they sleep. Characters who succumb to the Wisdom-draining influence of the region while they sleep experience strange dreams, and upon wakening such characters are momentarily filled with the urge to seek out the Shrine to Demogorgon to offer themselves as a sacrifice. This urge passes quickly enough, but the direction in which the urge tugged nevertheless points the way to the Shrine.

The entrance to the shrine is carved into the side of a low hill at Fogmire's heart. Atop this low hill rises a 40-foot-tall twisted spire of black rock, and at the hill's base gape twin carvings of baboon heads, their open maws granting access to two caverns leading under the hill.

The temple itself is carved out of solid rock. Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are 10 feet tall and the rooms within are dark. Doors are made from 8-inch-thick iron, rusted with age. Unworked caves are natural, but the floor has been cleared of debris. The chamber walls are smooth save for a band of leering demonic monkey faces carved into them at waist height. The entire place smells strongly of wet fur and sulphur, and the air is heavy and damp.

The remaining NPCs refuse to stay at the old ruins by themselves, but they do not wish to enter the evil temple either. When the PCs arrive there, they offer to hide out in the jungle nearby and await their return. Only Amella offers to accompany the PCs, and even then only if she's romantically involved with one of them and can't bear to let her lover out of her sight.

1. Two Entrances

The oppressive, fog-thick jungle thins here before a low hill. Above, a large spire of black rock looms, while at the hill's base, the image of two gigantic fanged baboon heads carved into the rock leers out at the jungle. Their gaping maws reveal two caves that lead into darkness.

A DC 30 Knowledge (religion or the planes) check reveals that the twin faces are a reference to Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons. Both entrances lead into the shrine, but only the eastern passageway is safe.

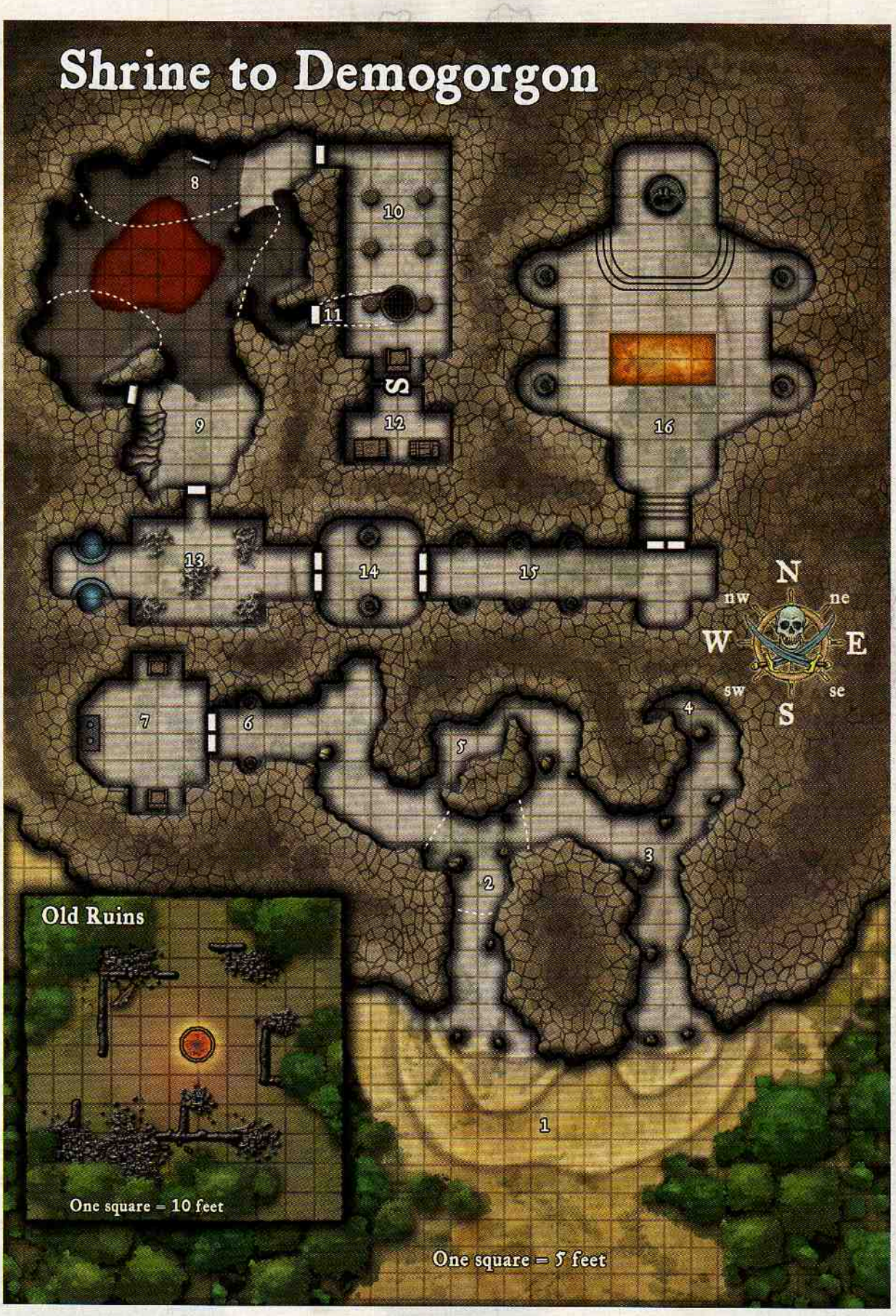
2. Rockfall Trap (EL 8)

Trap: This junction of the corridor is rigged to collapse the moment anyone steps inside the area indicated on the map, bringing tons of rock and debris down into that area.

Anyone standing in the indicated area on the map when the trap is set off is in the cave-in's bury zone. These characters take 8d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex half) and are buried. Characters within 10 feet of the bury zone are in the slide zone and take 3d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex negates). Characters that fail their save in the slide zone are also buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check each minute or take 1d6 points of lethal damage.

Characters who are not buried can dig out their friends. Characters can move 5 times their heavy load limit per minute and double that amount with an appropriate tool. Characters in the slide zone are buried by 1,000 pounds or rock, while those in the bury zone are underneath 2,000 pounds of rock.


Shrine to Demogorgon
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Old Ruins
One square = 10 feet
One square = 5 feet

Those inside the bury zone cannot be reached unless an adjacent square is free of debris. Characters in the slide zone can break free with a DC 20 Strength check, while those inside the bury zone who are adjacent to an open square or the slide zone can break free with a DC 25 Strength check.

Unless the PCs spend the time needed to dig out a tunnel, this intersection remains completely blocked by the fallen rock.

Rockfall Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; cave-in (see above), multiple targets (all creatures in the indicated area and those within 10 feet); Search DC 20, Disable Device DC 20.

3. Bloody Handprint

Up ahead, the passageway forks to both the right and the left, with both leading off into darkness. A faint dripping sound can be heard in the distance.

This is where Olangru and his mates appeared after abducting Urol. A DC 20 Spot check allows a character to notice a gnome-sized bloody handprint on the floor near the east wall.

4. Dead End

Attached to the wall of this dead-end by a pair of rusted manacles is the skeletal corpse of a human, his bones yellow with age.

This prisoner, an Olman hunter who was captured when he wandered too close to Fogmire, was placed here long ago by Olangru and subsequently forgotten and left to starve. Next to the corpse, scrawled on the wall with a piece of loose rock, is a rambling message written in Olman. It reads, "No way out. The jungle is pain and suffering. Maybe it will end soon and the spirit of the hawk will take me aloft from this accursed place. I beg him to take me away before I am dragged to the altar of the two-faced one. There is no way out." There are other words scrawled beneath this message, but they are mostly unintelligible aside from a few words such as "cannibals," "hungry," and "out."

5. Urol's Gear

Piled up in one corner of this small passageway are the crumbled and torn remains of Urols's tunic, boots, and any other gear he was wearing at the time he was abducted.

6. Doors of Sacrifice

The natural caverns give way to worked stone and a short hallway ending in a pair of tarnished bronze doors. The doors are engraved with scenes of all maner of demonic reptiles and simians tormenting human slaves, and the handles are made from the barbed tongues of fiends. A pair of stone statues flank the door in niches carved into the walls. These statues each depict leering monkey demons, their tongues dripping an oily red liquid that evaporates before it hits the floor below.

The statues set into the walls are just that—ordinary statues enchanted with a faint illusion magic that causes their tongues to drip blood. Beneath each statue is a tiny inscription written in Abyssal that can be found with a DC 15 Search skill check. The left statue's inscription reads, "give of your left," while the right's reads, "give of your right."

Anyone investigating the door can, with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check, identify that scene as one from the Abyss. The doors themselves are locked by a specialized version of *hold portal*. They can be opened if a living creature grasps both handles and turns simultaneously, while giving the appropriate blood sacrifice (a total of 2d4 points of damage).

Doors of Sacrifice: 3 in. thick bronze; Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30.

7. Shrine of Duplicity (EL 7)

This chamber is stained with blood. Two stone thrones sit on either side, set into alcoves. On the far side of the chamber is a blood-caked altar of greasy green stone, topped by a pair of black tallow candles. Iron-framed mirrors stand on either side of the altar, their reflections warped and indistinct.

This chamber hides the portal to reach the shrine's inner sanctum. To activate the portal, the PCs must first light both of the candles on the altar and then activate both of the mirrors. The order in which the candles are lit is very important.

If the north candle is lit first, warm blood pools on the throne on the south side of the room. If the character that lit this candle then sits in the south throne, he sees a dark glimmer in the mirror to the north of the altar. If that PC then touches the mirror to the north of the altar, a bestial image of himself appears within. This also sets off the Trap if the character fails a DC 19 Will save.

If the south candle is lit first, warm blood pools on the throne on the north side of the room. If the character that lit the candle then sits in the north throne, he sees a dark glimmer in the mirror to the south of the altar. If that PC then touches the mirror to the south of the altar, he sees a bestial image of himself appear. This also sets off the Trap if the character fails a DC 19 Will save.

If both candles are lit before their corresponding mirrors are touched, the candles explode into a 5-foot-radius burst of flame that deals 4d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 15 halves) to anyone caught within, then self-extinguish, resetting the trap.

If both mirrors are touched appropriately, triggering the trap twice, the mirrors change into swirling vortexes of darkness for 10 minutes. Anyone touching these vortexes (up to one character per turn per mirror) is teleported to area **8**. After 10 minutes the mirrors revert to normal, the blood around the thrones disappears, and both candles go out.

The mirrors, candles, and thrones are all minor artifacts. If damaged or removed from the Shrine, they melt away into brine only to reappear in their proper locations here.

Those who fail their saves when they touch one of the mirrors are transformed. They take on a savage appearance, hair going wild, eyes becoming bloodshot, and voices becoming thick and guttural. For 11 rounds, the feral PC attacks his one-time allies to the best of his abilities

(as determined by the DM). During this time, the PC's normal self appears in the mirror, crying for release. The PC controls this image and can give advice to the rest of the group, but can take no other actions. The feral PC is magically controlled for the duration of his rage as if by *dominate monster* (but without granting additional saves when forced to act against his nature)—*dispel magic* or a similar effect can end the assault early (the domination effect functions at caster level 11th). *Protection from evil* or *protection from chaos* also prevents the effect from taking place. Once the attack has ended, the affected character returns to normal and the savage image returns to the mirror.

Disarming the trap allows the mirror to be activated without risk of the character turning on the rest of the party. If the roll to disarm the trap is failed by 5 or more, the character making the attempt is subject to the trap, but the mirror does not yet count as being activated for the purposes of opening the portal.

Mirror Trap: CR 7; magical; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (transformation into savagery—see above; DC 19 Will negates); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 30.

8. Olangru's Harem (EL 8)

The mirror portals in area 7 deposit anyone who sucessfully triggers them to a space adjacent to the single mirror located on the north side of this cavern.

This huge chamber is bathed in a strange red light that comes from above. Thorny vines grow across the walls and toward the ceiling some forty feet up. A natural stone bridge crosses through the upper reaches of this room, directly above a large pool of crimson liquid. To the north stands a large mirror, its warped surface framed in iron. The warm scent of wet fur is overpowering here, and a furtive shuffling echoes down from above.

The ceiling in this chamber is 40 feet high and the second level is 20 feet above the floor of the room. The door in the eastern wall that leads to area **11** is made of iron and locked (DC 25 Open Lock). The pool of blood in the center of the room is only a few feet deep at its center, making the center of the pool difficult terrain. The blood itself is real, perpetuated by the unholy influence that pervades this shrine.

Anyone touching the mirror turns its reflection into a pool of inky blackness. Touching the surface of the mirror at this point teleports that character back to area 7. This means of travel does not function while the candles in area 7 are lit (they automatically extinguish after 10 minutes if unattended).

Creatures: This chamber is the den of Olangru's three bar-lgura mates. The trio of foul demons is currently on the upper floor of the room and is not immediately aware of the PCs. Give the demons Listen checks every round that the PCs attempt to do anything that makes sound, either against an opposed Move Silently check, or against a static DC (see page 78 of the *Player's Handbook*). If the PCs manage to remain quiet long enough to move up to the higher level, they might get a chance to surprise the fiends. Otherwise, the demons attack immediately upon detecting the intruders.

Bar-Lguras (3): hp 51 each; see page 48.

Tactics: The bar-lguras begin combat by teleporting to the lower level of the room, surveying the area and moving into a position where they can charge the next round. If possible, they charge and make full use of their pounce ability. The bar-lguras attempt to abduct a weaker opponent to the upper level where they can fight alone. Alternatively, truly bothersome PCs are teleported to area **11**, the pit beneath area **10**, and left there. If given the chance, the bar-lgura use their spell-like abilities to confuse and hinder the PCs, such as creating a wall at the top of the stairs leading to area **9** with *major image*, using *invisibility* to set up an easy charge or flank, and tripping or disarming opponents with *telekinesis*.

Note that the PCs can only enter this chamber two at a time, meaning that if the first pair alerts the bar-lguras to their presence, the rest might find a combat in progress when they arrive.

9. Upper Level

A set of crooked natural stairs leads to the upper level of this large chamber. There are two iron doors leading out of this area, one to the south and one to the north. Both are unlocked. Once up here, the light source in this room is clearly visible. A large blood-red piece of quartz is lodged in the ceiling and filters in natural light from outside. Small mounds of gnawed bones litter the floor along with tufts of rust-red fur.

10. Throne Room (EL 8)

Six columns run down the length of this room, flanking a pit covered by a rusted iron grate. On the far side of the room is a stone throne, and the room itself is chokingly foul-smelling.

This area is used by Olangru as a throne room, where he plans out his future conquests and contemplates the coming glory of Demogorgon. The rusted iron grate in the center of the room is solid (treat as a portcullis) and although it can be safely walked upon, anyone attempting Tumble or Balance skill checks in that area takes a –2 penalty on the check.

The throne on the opposite side of the room is made of simple stone and is carved with the likeness of grinning monkey demons. A DC 15 Search check of the throne reveals scuff marks on the floor in front of it, indicating that the throne has been pushed forward in the past away from the wall (which contains the secret door to area **12**). Locating this secret door takes a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: Olangru's court dwells in this chamber, a mob of wretched, horned, and feral fiendish baboons. The baboons spend much of their time loitering in the southern half of the room, noisily waiting for Olangru to bring them food. The moment the PCs enter this chamber, the baboons begin howling and shrieking in rage before surging forward as a mob to attack.

Mob of Fiendish Baboons CR 8

CE Gargantuan magical beast (extraplanar, mob of Medium magical beasts)

Monster Manual 107, 268; *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 59

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +4, Spot +4

AC 9, touch 8, flat-footed 7

hp 165 (30 HD)

Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 6

Fort +18, **Ref** +19, **Will** +9

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee mob (5d6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +36

Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, expert grappler, trample (2d6+3)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 4

SQ mob anatomy

Feats Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun

Skills Climb +10, Listen +4, Spot +4

Expert Grappler (Ex) The mob of fiendish baboons can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other targets. A mob of fiendish baboons is never flat-footed while grappling.

Mob Anatomy (Ex) A mob of fiendish baboons has no clear front or back and no discernible anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or sneak attacks. It cannot be flanked, tripped, grappled, or bull rushed. A mob of fiendish baboons is made up of relatively small numbers of individual creatures, so spells or effects that target specific numbers of creatures can have an effect on a mob. Each specific creature that is slain, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated by spells or effects that target specific creatures bestows two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains negative levels equal to its Hit Dice breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. Negative levels gained in this manner are not the result of negative energy (and thus cannot be blocked by *death ward* or removed by *restoration*), but never result in permanent level loss. A mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) for spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and evocation spells.

Mob Attack (Ex) A mob of fiendish baboons must move into an opponent's space to attack, which provokes attacks of opportunity. It can occupy the same space as a creature since it tramples and moves around its victim. It can move through spaces large enough for its component creatures. A mob inflicts 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move, with no attack roll needed. Mob attacks ignore concealment and cover, but damage reduction does apply.

Trample (Ex) A mob that simply moves over a creature and doesn't end its movement with that creature in one of its occupied squares can trample the creature for 2d6+3 points of damage. The victim can either make an attack of opportunity against the baboons or make a DC 27 Reflex save to take half damage.

Tactics: The mob of fiendish baboons moves toward the PCs at full speed, attempting to grapple the closest one while the rest take damage from the mob. The mob tramples lone targets to reach a group to accomplish this. Each round, the mob continues to grapple one target and deal mob damage to the rest. This continues until the mob is dispersed, at which time the few remaining fiendish baboons quickly scurry out of the chamber or hide amongst their dead fellows.

11. The Pit

The door to this tiny chamber from area **8** is locked, requiring a DC 25 Open Lock check to open. Inside, the pit is a mess of bones, scraps of flesh, dried blood, tattered rags, and other things best left unmentioned, for it is in here that Olangru feeds his baboon subjects, imprisoning the still-living food in this chamber and then opening the grate to area **10**.

12. Two Chests (EL 5)

This small chamber features a pair of rusted iron chests sitting against the far wall. The odor of damp fur hangs heavily in this cramped room.

These two chests once again present the PCs with a choice between the right and the left. The interiors of both chests are lined with lead. Both chests are identical in appearance, bearing engravings that depict horrid flames consuming the just and the righteous. In addition, both are locked, requiring a DC 30 Open Lock check to open.

Trap: The chest on the left is trapped—anyone who opens it or successfully picks the lock unleashes a *fireball*.

***Fireball* Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: The chest on the right contains 2,000 gp and 3,000 sp. Resting on top of the coins is a left-handed ape paw made of iron, a *+1 buckler*, and a *wand of aid* (50 charges). The ape paw is a strange key, one of two vital in opening the doors that lead into area **15**.

13. Chamber of Bones (EL 9)

Thousands of bones are piled high in the corners and the center of the room, a grisly testament to past atrocities. The sound of bubbling water comes from the dark western end of the room.

Many of the creatures captured by the bar-lguras end up in this room, fed to its hungry inhabitant. Their bones litter the floor here, increasing the DC of all Tumble and Balance checks made in the room by 2. The large bone piles are difficult terrain.

The western alcove in this chamber contains a pair of fountains, filled by water pouring out the fanged maws of large baboon heads. The heads are mounted on the walls just above the fountains. The water is quite murky, making it impossible to see the bottom of either fountain. On top of each baboon head is an iron valve, used to shut off the water. One of these valves is trapped.

Creature: This chamber is the lair of Ilzytik, a spirit naga that has thrown in its lot with the bar-lguras in hopes of gaining even greater power. The naga lives here, guarding the door leading to area **14** and the passageway leading to the main shrine. The demons also use the naga as a source of healing and other simple spellcasting.

Ilzytik, spirit naga: hp 76; *Monster Manual* 192.

Spells Known (CL 7th, +7 ranged touch)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds, glitterdust* (DC 15), *scorching ray*
1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds, disguise self* (DC 14), *mage armor, magic missile, shield of faith*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+7 ranged touch), *cure minor wounds, detect magic, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

Tactics: Ilzytik casts *mage armor* every day as part of her preparation, and has the spell up when the PCs arrive. Every round of combat in area **8** or **9** gives the naga a chance to become alerted to intruders (DC 5 Listen check). Once alerted, she casts *disguise self*, changing her appearance to that of a zombie naga so as to trick opponents into underestimating her. She then waits until she hears something from directly outside the room (Listen DC 8 for talking, DC 18 for movement). Once she hears characters outside her door, she casts *shield of faith*.

When the characters enter the room, the naga casts *displacement* and waits to see who resists her gaze. On following rounds she attacks those who resist with *lightning bolts, scorching rays,* and *magic missiles* as the situation allows. The naga proudly wishes to display her loyalty to Demogorgon and fights until slain.

Trap: The valve on the southernmost fountain (or left fountain, for those looking into the alcove) is trapped. Manipulating this valve in any way causes the trap to go off.

***Ice Storm* Trap**: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*ice storm*, 7th-level wizard, 3d6 bludgeoning and 2d6 cold); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Treasure: If the valve on the northern well is turned off, the water slowly drains from the pool over a period of 20 minutes, revealing a 5-foot-deep pit. At the bottom of the pit, among a mess of silt and bones, is a right-handed iron ape paw. This strange key is one of two vital in opening the doors that lead into area **15**. One of the bones at the bottom is made of copper and is in fact a *lesser silent metamagic rod*. The rod can be located with a DC 20 Spot check or a DC 10 Search check.

In addition, there are a few treasures scattered throughout the bone piles. In the northwest corner is a *+1 spell storing warhammer*. The bone pile in the center of the room hides a *potion of haste*. Both of these items can be found with a DC 15 Search check.

14. Iron Ape Statues

The iron doors leading into this chamber are not locked, but they are very heavy and difficult to open, requiring a DC 25 Strength check to move.

A pair of iron doors, carefully carved with the images of ape demons and burning landscapes, loom in the wall opposite the entrance to this chamber. The walls and floor of this chamber are polished smooth, and two large statues stand in the chamber. Also made of iron, these statues depict hulking simian fiends, each one holding out an arm missing a hand. The statue on the right is missing its left, while the statue on the left is missing its right.

The doors leading to area **15** are locked with a special version of *hold portal* (CL 20th) that only allows them to be opened when the ape paws from areas **12** and **13** are replaced on the correct statues. Otherwise the doors can be forced open with a DC 40 Strength check or destroyed (hardness 10, hp 160).

15. Hall of Howls (EL 1)

This long hall is lit by flaming brands held aloft by iron ape statues placed at even intervals on either side. Each of the ape statues has its head thrown back, as if silently howling at the ceiling above. At the far end of the hall, another pair of double doors, this time made from gleaming copper, stands closed.

The large copper doors at the end of the hall are identical to the ones that led into this room. They are not locked.

Trap: Each of the ape statues is trapped to emit a piercing ape howl when any living creature comes within 5 feet of it. The howling continues until the living creature is more than 5 feet away. While this howling does no physical harm, it is easily heard throughout much of the shrine complex. This trap also causes the ape statues in area **16** to howl, alerting Olangru to the intruder's presence.

Howling Statue Trap: CR 1; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*ghost sound*, 5th-level wizard); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

16. Demogorgon's Shrine (EL 10)

This huge chamber is watched over by five hideous statues. To the east and west stand four towering demonic ape statues in alcoves, facing a roaring fire pit in the room's center. On the opposite side of the room is an even larger stone statue. Possessing the stout, stylized body of an ape, this statue has two stone tentacles where each of its arms should be. Sprouting from its shoulders are two fanged baboon heads. The statue lords over the room atop a great dais, staring out in frozen rage.

This chamber is Olangru's shrine to Demogorgon, built hundreds of years ago by a sect of now long-dead troglodytes. The ceiling is 50 feet high at its domed peak (directly above the fire). Toward the walls, the ceiling is only 40 feet tall. The room is well lit by the fire. The stairs leading into the room rise a total of 5 feet.

The 12-foot-tall statue atop the 5-foot-high raised dais is a stylized image of the Prince of Demons himself—a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals this. Although the statue is actually a construct, it does not act until later. The smaller 8-foot-tall ape statues in this room are made of iron, and although menacing, are harmless.

The fire pit in the center of the chamber is 5 feet deep, but its flames rise to a height of 10 feet. Anyone falling into this pit takes 6d6 points of fire damage each round. Anyone within 5 feet of the inferno takes 1d6 fire damage every round. Anyone within 20 feet above the fire takes this damage as well.

Creatures: Poor Urol dangles 40 feet above the floor of the room (30 feet above

the fire), suspended by chains that connect to a winch on the east wall of the room. The winch is located 10 feet above the floor, between the two demonic ape statues. If more than one character was kidnapped, all dangle above the pit, connected to the same winch. If he sees the PCs enter the room, he wimpers and cries for help, unfortunately alerting the other denizens of the room.

There are two other creatures in this room, but they do not fight together. The first is the bar-lgura Olangru. If alerted to the PCs' presence, he turns *invisible* and waits for the right moment to strike. The second creature is a terrible construct known as a Lemorian golem. Created centuries ago by troglodyte priests of the Prince of Demons, the Lemorian golem is an "anchor" of sorts that focuses the eldritch influence of Gaping Maw, allowing Demogorgon's Abyssal realm to focus on the immediate region.

Olangru: hp 95; see page 45.

Lemorian Golem: hp 51; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: Assuming he is properly warned, Olangru begins the fight invisible. When the characters enter the chamber, he casts *see invisibility* and *telekinesis*. He uses the latter to unlatch the winch, causing Urol to descend toward the pit at a rate of 5 feet per round. Following this, the fiend charges the most dangerous PC (as determined by their earlier encounter), using his pounce and skirmish abilities to full effect. He continues to charge from foe to foe each round, dealing as much damage as possible until slain. Note that all of Olangru's wounds from the previous fight have been healed by the naga.

Once Olangru is killed, the PCs have three rounds before the Lemorian golem animates and attacks. When this occurs, the giant two-headed statue grinds into angry life. Its tentacles, despite being made of stone, sway and writhe, and its two fanged maws snap and gnash before unleashing a bone-shaking howl.

The Lemorian golem opens combat by using one of its howls. It then moves toward the nearest character to attack. It grapples the first character it can, constricting every round until that character falls unconscious before tossing him aside to grab another. Meanwhile, the Lemorian golem continues to attack with its other two tentacles and howls again. The Lemorian golem does not seek out particular foes, but instead goes after the nearest every round. It fights until destroyed.

Treasure: Aside from Olangru's gear, a small crucible stands on the dais. Used to make offerings to the Prince of Demons, the crucible contains ashes and charred bits of pulverized bone. In the bottom of the crucible lies a *ring of protection* +2 that Olangru overlooked before tossing the hand that once wore it into the fire.

Developments: With the destruction of the Lemorian golem, the power of the temple shatters. A terrible oppressive aura fades, and over the course of the next several days, Fogmire reverts to normal jungle and swamp. The fog is the first to fade, and by the the time the PCs emerge from the shrine, it has burned off completely. Monstrous predators soon infest

the region, but the unholy influence of Gaping Maw over this portion of the Isle of Dread never returns.

If rescued, Urol is battered and bruised and refuses to speak of his time in captivity. From this point forward, the gnome is more reserved and quiet. His enthusiasm for the isle has vanished, and he can sometimes be seen staring off into the distance and shuddering.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the PCs emerge from the shrine to Demogorgon, they are enthusiastically greeted by any NPCs that were waiting for them outside. With the fog lifted, it's a relatively simple matter to head south, and by the end of a day's march, the PCs are rewarded with a wide trail. A DC 12 Survival check is enough to note that this is no mere game trail—it's a poorly-maintained but nonetheless recently used trail running northwest to southeast. Urol recognizes the trail, and informs the PCs that it leads to the friendly village of Tanaroa to the southeast.

If the PCs aren't quite 9th level yet, feel free to have them encounter a few last monsters as they make their way south toward Tanaroa. A flock of three terror birds, a pack of six deinonychuses, or even another tyrannosaurus all make excellent encounters. If you have the next adventure handy, you can use the information there to round out additional encounters as you see fit. Eventually, the PCs reach the end of the trail at a fifty-foot-high wall of stone blocks. This wall stretches across the two-mile-wide isthmus entirely, but a pair of massive wooden gates in the center allow passage. As the PCs approach, the Tanaroan villagers who guard the wall issue a challenge. The villagers can understand a few words of Common, and as long as the PCs don't take up a threatening posture and can calm the natives with a DC 15 Diplomacy check, they can negotiate passage. Otherwise, the natives make the PCs wait for several minutes while they bring their chieftain to speak to the PCs.

If you wish to expand this section of the adventure, the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path contains more information about the villagers. In any event, the natives quickly recognize that the PCs are outlanders and come to the obvious conclusion that they are looking for Farshore. After allowing the group a bit of time to rest, a few select villagers escort the PCs to the village of Mora 30 miles to the south. From there, the group is put into a number of simple canoes and taken to the colony of Farshore.

As the PCs approach the colony, it should become obvious that trouble is afoot. Even before the PCs sight the walls of Farshore, they spot plumes of smoke rising in the air. Screams and the unmistakable sounds of battle reach the PCs' ears, and as they grow closer, they recognize Lavinia's ship, the *Blue Nixie*, docked at one of several piers along with multiple smaller ships. Yet there is one ship that does not belong, a rugged-looking caravel with red sails and a crimson jolly-roger flying from its main mast—the pirates of the Crimson Fleet have come to Farshore, and their attack is well under way!

APPENDIX ONE: SHIPWRECK SURVIVIORS

The Frightened Sailor

AMELLA VENKALIE **CR 4**
Female human rogue 4
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 20 (4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6–1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *potion of remove disease*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +11, Bluff +12, Craft (carpentry) +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +11, Swim +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +9
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection +1*, silver ring decorated with tiny emeralds that look like multiple eyes worth 200 gp

A slight but powerful woman with fine blonde hair tied neatly back from her forehead, Amella dresses to fight and sail rather than to please the eye. A thin scar graces her right cheek. Amella is rather foul-mouthed, fond of uttering oaths only heard in the worst dockside taverns. Confident, haughty, and astute, she does not suffer fools gladly. She makes few attachments, having buried one husband—a dashing sea captain named Heldram Flashwell. They once ran a smuggling operation some distance from Sasserine, but were betrayed by a group of shifty gnomes led by a treacherous cur named Shortstone Badgewell—it was this cruel gnome who murdered her husband. This event has left Amella with a poor opinion of gnomes. She makes friends slowly, but once someone has earned her trust, she's quite loyal despite her carefree attitude. At your discretion, one of the PCs might bear a more-than-passing resemblance to her late husband, in which case her reaction to the PC could blossom into romance or degrade into a bitter rivalry, depending on how that PC treats her.

The Demanding Noble

AVNER MERAVANCHI **CR 2**
Male human aristocrat 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 13 (3 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk longsword +3 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack

Abilities Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack
Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9, Forgery +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +6, Ride +7

Possessions masterwork longsword, Meravanchi signet ring worth 250 gp, Thunderstrike (light horse), military saddle

Avner is a despicable cur—a slanderer, a deflowerer of maidens, and an utter cad who cares only about himself. Yet on the surface he is charming, helpful, and brave. This is all an act. When trouble appears, he disappears. When coins go missing, he is the culprit. When ladies are left in a lurch at the altar, he's off frolicking with their sisters.

Despite the slow recovery of her wealth, Lavinia couldn't quite finance the expedition to Farshore on her own. She spoke with the other noble families of Sasserine, but only one felt the profits for aiding her outweighed the dangers—the semi-notorious Meravanchis. Of course, Avner's father, Zebula, had an additional reason to send Avner on this trip. By giving Avner the responsibility for representing Meravanchi interests in Farshore, he effectively removes the threat of him embarrassing the family in Sasserine. Avner has no concept that his father wanted to get rid of him, and carries with him a vastly inflated sense of self-importance as a result.

The Island Guide

UROL FOROL **CR 3**

Male gnome druid 1/expert 3
NG Small humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +12, Spot +10
Languages Common, Draconic, Druidic, Gnome, Sylvan

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 26 (4 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8 (+10 vs. illusion)

Spd 20 ft.
Melee quarterstaff +1 (1d4–2)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –4
Combat Gear *wand of shillelagh* (32 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 1st)
1st—*calm animals* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*
0—*mending, purify food and drink, resistance*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)
1/day—*dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 10), *prestidigitation, speak with animals*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10
SQ animal companion (crow named Miss Crazzle), spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), wild empathy +1
Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature])
Skills Concentration +6, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (nature) +16, Listen +12, Spot +10, Survival +12
Possessions combat gear, *+1 leather armor*, quarterstaff, *cloak of resistance +1*, sleeping cap for Miss Crazzle

Urol is a bent old gnome who constantly squints. He carries the odor of the land about with him, an odor that most find unpleasant. He is talkative and chipper except when the subject of the natural world comes up, whereupon he flies into a frenzy of excited, stuttering bliss, expounding upon obscure and often strangely fascinating (to him, at least) bits of lore.

Urol has actually been to the Isle of Dread before, although his stay, in his words, was, "Unfortunately short—due to events beyond my control, I might add! We've certainly nothing to fear this time around!" He demanded to be part of Lavinia's expedition when he learned about it, and indeed his knowledge of the isle could greatly help the colonists.

Urol often evokes Amella's anger during the adventure, despite his best efforts to win her friendship. As the days pass, it falls to the PCs to keep him out of her hair.

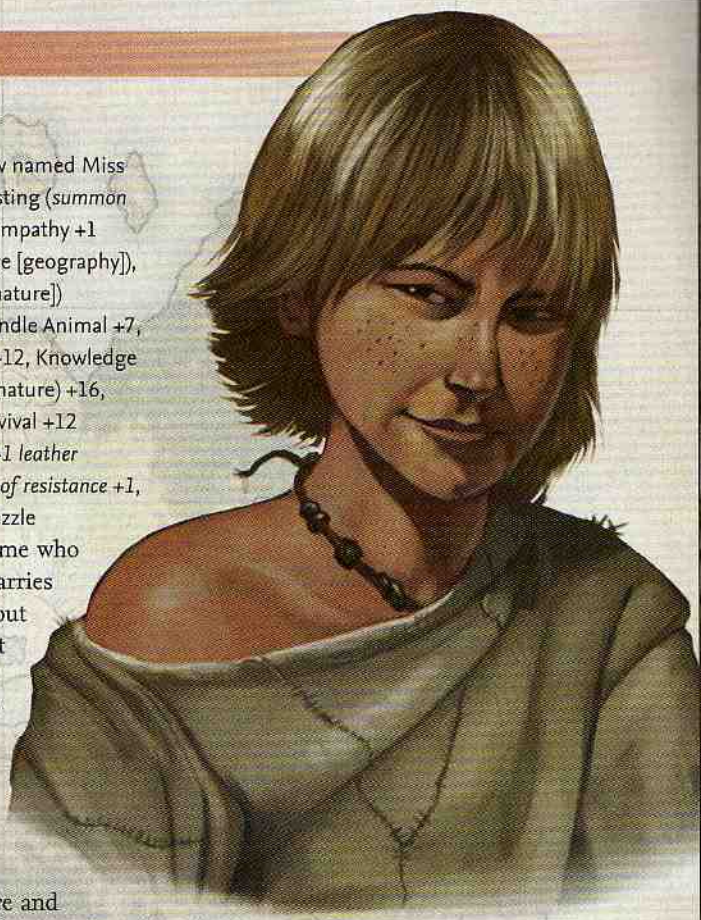
The Impressionable Youth

TAVEY NESK **CR 1**

Male human expert 2
CG Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Dodge
hp 11 (2 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +1 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*



Tavey Nesk

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9
Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])
Skills Balance +6, Climb +5, Escape Artist +3, Jump +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Tumble +8, Swim +5, Use Rope +6
Possessions combat gear, leather armor, 3 daggers, silk rope (50 feet)

Tavey spent most of his young life aboard the *Sea Wyvern* after he was rescued from the sea six years ago. He remembers little before that time, but has the distinct impression that his parents were sailors (although he usually exaggerates this to claim they were either rich adventurers or deadly pirates). Tavey dreams of one day becoming an adventurer himself and has been following and studying the PCs closely ever since they came onboard. Now that he has the chance to spend time with them, he latches on to the character with the highest Charisma and hopes to get him to teach him everything he knows. Tavey may pester the characters, but he truly is a nice kid and knows when he goes too far. Throughout this adventure, Tavey stays away from fights, standing in the

background and shadow fighting in the same technique as his hero.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW MONSTER

Lemorian Golem

Four stone tentacles extend from the body of this towering statue, each undulating of its own accord. Two sculpted baboon heads sprout from its shoulders, maws agape with a look of menace.

LEMORIAN GOLEM **CR 10**

Always CE Large construct

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages Abyssal

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 96 (12 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine or good

Immune construct traits

SR 18

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +17 (1d8+8/19–20 plus rot)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, improved grab, constrict 1d8+12 plus rot

Special Actions howl

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11

SQ construct traits, dual nature

Feats Ability Focus (howl), Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Climb +16, Listen +16, Spot +16

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or troop (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 13–20 HD (Large), 21–30 HD (Huge), 31–36 HD (Gargantuan)

Constrict (Ex) A Lemorian golem that establishes a hold deals 1d8+12 points of constriction damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage as the target's flesh rots away into corruption. The Constitution damage can be resisted with a DC 16 Fortitude save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dual Nature (Ex) A Lemorian golem has two minds. As such, it retains the ability to fight and defend itself while grappling a single foe, also retaining its Dexterity bonus to AC. If a Lemorian golem grapples two foes, it loses its ability to make attacks with its tentacles and its Dexterity bonus to AC.

Howl (Su) A Lemorian golem can howl as a standard action (or as part of a full-attack action due to its dual nature), causing all those within 50 feet to become shaken for 1d6 rounds (DC 18 Will save negates). Each head can howl once per day. A shaken creature becomes panicked for 1d6 rounds if affected by a second howl. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rot (Su) Anyone struck by a Lemorian golem must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage as their flesh rots and turns gangrenous from the unholy contact. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Forged in the pits of Demogorgon's lair in the Abyss, Lemorian golems serve Material Plane cults of the Prince of Demons as focuses for their unholy rites and as guardians of their foul temples and shrines. Named for the Prince of Demons' "capital" city on Gaping Maw, Lemoriax, where these constructs serve as guardians and soldiers, only Demogorgon knows the secret of their construction. When found outside Gaping Maw, they are usually in the temples of cultists, waiting to be used as part of some devious plot.

A Lemorian golem fights with ferocious tenacity, pursuing opponents as long as they remain in sight. Its favorite tactic is to grapple a single foe while howling. Although constructs, Lemorian golems possess a startling degree of intelligence and a modicum of free will. They serve the Prince of Demons in all ways, and if they feel a cult they're associated with is failing their master, a Lemorian golem often takes the cult's punishment or destruction into its own hands. A Lemorian golem without a cult generally remains as a guardian of its shrine, content that Demogorgon will some day send them a new flock.

Reports of Jason Bulmahn's untimely demise in the "Hall of Harsh Reflections" were slightly premature. He has since been animated as an author zombie who spends every undead moment working on adventures, articles, or game books. At press time, his only statement was "I before E-rrrrrgg."

Mt.Zogon
MUSHROOM, BEFORE I MADE YOU, I WAS SAD AND ALONE. YOU ARE THE SOURCE OF ALL MY HAPPINESS.
I LOVE YOU... MY LOVE BEGAN WHEN YOU WERE A TINY SPORE, AND WILL ENDURE UNTIL MY LAST BREATH.
YOU ARE MY BEST FRIEND.
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SO...DO YOU MIND IF I PUT THIS ADORABLE LITTLE HAT ON YOU?
WHY DO YOU HATE ME SO MUCH?
BY TONY MOSELEY
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BRIGHT MOUNTAIN KING

BY CAINE CHANDLER
BY UDON
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

ANY SETTING | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

A nefarious villain's plan to ruin a dwarven nation's economy draws the PCs into the perilous depths of an ancient dwarven tomb. Yet does achieving their goal in the tomb play into their enemy's hands?

"Bright Mountain King" is a D&D adventure for four 16th-level characters. The location of Khun-drukar can easily be slotted into existing campaigns by placing it in any remote mountainous location.

Adventure Background

Centuries ago, the dwarven city of Khun-drukar was little more than an empty mountainside where nature remained untouched by the machinations of civilization. It was not until the legendary wanderings of the dwarven hero Gyrand Diamonmer that the city came into being, for Gyrand was blessed by Moradin and privy to the knowlede of his god.

Gyrand discovered a secret deep within the Tormar Mountains that would change his people's destiny. Within an enormous cavern a planar breach had torn open a tiny gate into the heart of the Elemental Plane of Earth. For centuries, minerals had seeped through into the cavern, creating a fantastic display of gemstones and precious metals in the shape of a great tree. Its branches stretched upward into the stone, creating an almost limitless network of riches just waiting to be carved out of the mountain.

Gyrand named the tree Khun-mar-dornar ("Bright Mountain King")—and from here he could determine the location of all the major mineral veins within the Tormars.

Moradin sent a vision to Gyrand warning him of the greed that would overcome his people if they found Khun-mar-dornar, and of the blood that would be spilt because of it. So Gyrand forged a mighty vault door and sealed it with powerful magic so none could enter, finally leaving to tell others of the wealth within the mountains.

Bolstered by newfound riches, the city of Khun-drukar prospered. Gyrand eventually died peacefully and was entombed deep beneath his most prosperous mine. Centuries passed for the people of Khun-drukar and the legend of Khun-mar-dornar flowed through the ages.

The passing of years meant little to the dwarves. They continued mining into the heart of the Tormars in search of the mythical source of all riches. It was during this time that a noble elf druid named Carradoc visited the city, acting as an ambassador to the growing nation. Rather than admire the dwarves' prosperity, Carradoc saw the damage the dwarves wrought on the mountainside

Khun-drukar

Khun-drukar (small city): Conventional; AL LG; 30,000 gp limit; Assets 14,700,000 gp; Population: 9,800; Mixed (dwarves 79%, gnomes 9%, humans 5%, halflings 3%, elves 2%, half-orc 1%, other 1%).

Authority Figure: **High Thane Kiel the Thrice-Slain**, male dwarf fighter 14.

Important Characters: **Cardinal Entagin of Moradin**, male dwarf cleric 12; **Lady Sparklegem**, female gnome paladin 7 (holy warrior of Garl Glittergold and reputed demon slayer); **Guildmaster Athitan Rossilon**, male dwarf ranger 8/expert 1 (leader of the guild of prospectors and surveyors); **Shmifey Shmifson** male ogre expert 10 (a particularly stupid but capable blacksmith and armorer); **Duchess Serinoth Berryton**, female halfling wizard 9 (visiting dignitary and expert chef).

Notes: Due to the influence of Khun-mar-dornar upon the Tormars the city's wealth is double for its size. Should Duke Carradoc succeed in his plans, the population halves and the city's wealth and assets attributes reduce to normal levels within one year.

with their thirst for wealth, and secretly despised the miners for their greed.

During his stay, Carradoc learned of the legend of Khun-mar-dornar and initially dismissed it as a bedtime story. As the druid grew in stature and power, however, he whispered to the land, searching for the source of the dwarves' wealth, and the land whispered back the truth of the story. The elven ambassador saw his chance to ruin the dwarved city and prevent their abuse of nature, and began to plot the destruction of Khun-mar-dornar.

After decades of searching, Carradoc discovered the vault door, but has so far been unable to open it. He needs the weapon entrusted to Gyrand by Moradin himself: *Darsam-tor-ews* (the *Celestial Soulhammer*), the only item capable of breaking the vault's seal.

But when Carradoc's agents searched Gyrand's crypt, they discovered that the hammer had been stolen a century ago by an evil dwarven warlord. Now Carradoc's agents seek the thief's tomb to retrieve the key before their master can end the dwarven community's razing of nature.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are approached by one of Carradoc's minions and asked to retrieve a stolen dwarven relic from an ancient tomb. Within, they must overcome the tomb's defenses to recover *Darsam-tor-ews*, bringing it to the surface to return it to the dwarven people.

The weapon is taken from the party and spirited away to Carradoc, who waits deep within the tunnels adjacent to the vault of the Khun-mar-dornar. The PCs learn of the deception and must recover the weapon before the evil druid can open the vault and destroy the source of all of the wealth in the Tormars.

Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins when one of Carradoc's agents, a dwarf named Teverak Silversmith, approaches the PCs and asks them to retrieve an ancient dwarven artifact from a tomb near Khun-drukar. Here are a couple alternative hooks:

- The PCs come across the remains of Teverak's first expedition while journeying through the mountains. The hapless survivors beg the PCs to finish their job and recover the lost artifact of their ancestors. When the PCs emerge from the tomb with the hammer, Teverak is waiting for them.
- A druidic council hires the PCs to investigate the disappearance of an elven ambassador. The council suspects that Carradoc seeks the mythical *Darsam-tor-ews*, and sends the PCs to investigate its last known resting place: the tomb of Bajak Thunderfist.

Chapter One: Tomb of the Renegade

As soon as he learned that *Darsam-tor-ews* was necessary to open the vault containing Khun-mar-dornar, Carradoc dispatched his most capable servant, a dwarf named Teverak Silversmith, to retrieve it from Gyrand's crypt. Since the location of the crypt was well known, and Teverak was an accomplished thief in his own right, this initially seemed to be a simple task. Indeed, Teverak had little trouble penetrating Gyrand's tomb, but once inside he discovered he was too late. The *Soulhammer*, along with most of the other valuables, had been stolen long ago.

Undaunted by this setback, Teverak immediately began investigating the current whereabouts of *Darsam-tor-ews*. It didn't take him long to divine its resting place: the tomb of the famous renegade Bajak Thunderfist. His organized an expedition to retrieve the weapon from this tomb, but soon ran into a problem. The paranoid renegade had defended his resting place with potent traps and guardians, and his first expedition ended in disaster. Unwilling to report his failure to Carradoc, Teverak hatched a new plan. All he needs is a group of adventurers to enter the tomb and retrieve the weapon for him. With this in mind, he approaches the PCs.

The dwarf claims to be a representative of the city of Khun-drukar. He explains that city officials have recently learned of the location of their ancestor and patron Gyrand Diamonmer's famous greatclub *Darsam-tor-ews*, stolen from Gyrand's crypt centuries ago. Unfortunately, it resides somewhere inside the tomb of Bajak Thunderfist, a notorious renegade whose tomb is guarded by various traps and monsters. He offers the PCs 25,000 gp worth of precious gems if they bring him *Darsam-tor-ews* so he can present it to the city officials and return it to its rightful resting place.

Teverak's tale is a reasonable one, and with his high Bluff skill and *ring of mind shielding*, the PCs should be have no reason to suspect him. If they are wary Teverak encourages them by telling them that they "will be renowned for years in dwarven cities across the land if they recover the weapon." Teverak gauges a party intelligently, playing on what seems to be their primary interest (be it greed, religion, the greater good, or something else).

Teverak Silversmith **CR 16**

Male dwarf rogue 10/fighter 6

NE Medium humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +10

Languages Common, Dwarven, Giant

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge
hp 134 (16 HD)
Fort +12 (+14 vs. poison), **Ref** +12, **Will** +4 (+2 vs. spells); improved evasion
Spd 30 ft.
Melee +2 *battleaxe* +20 (1d8+8/19–20/×3) or +2 *battleaxe* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+8/19–20/×3) and +1 *keen handaxe* +18 (1d6+3/19–20/×3)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +17/+12/+7 (1d8+4/×3)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +17
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +5d6
Combat Gear *potion of displacement, potion of cat's grace, potion of cure serious wounds, potions of invisibility* (2), *potion of fly*
Abilities Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10
SQ dwarf traits, trapfinding, trap sense +3
Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)
Skills Balance +10, Bluff +16, Climb +8, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +10, Hide +13, Jump +16, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +9, Move Silently +13, Ride +7, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Tumble +18
Possessions combat gear, *+3 studded leather armor, +2 battleaxe, +1 keen handaxe,* masterwork composite longbow (+4 Strength) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor +2, belt of giant strength +4, boots of striding and springing, cape of the montebank, ring of feather falling, ring of mind shielding,* pouch of 1,000 gp worth of minor gemstones

The Tomb of Bajak Thunderfist

Several centuries ago, Bajak Thunderfist was an officer in service to Khun-drukar. During a wererat-hunting mission through the sewers, he stumbled across a collapsed tunnel that lead him into the ancient resting place of Gyrand Diamonmer, from which he stole the mythical *Darsam-tor-ews* without compunction. Afterward he left the city and became a mercenary captain, using the weapon to win glory and riches for himself and his men.

He eventually became one of the richest plunderers in the area, but his greed was his undoing. A cursed suit of armor failed, allowing an elven arrow to penetrate his heart, killing him instantly. His son used his wealth to entomb him in a crypt fit for a thane.

Bajak's greed was legendary, and his tomb was built to ensure it would never be plundered. His son sealed dozens of workers within, cursing them to guard their master's treasure for eternity. Bajak's greed and paranoia have not let him rest, and his spirit lingers in his tomb, awaiting the day that tomb robbers breach his inner chambers.

You can place the entrance to Bajak's tomb anywhere remote in your campaign.

The Entrance (EL 15)

This small cave contains nothing but a small well with a crude stone carving of a dragon directly above it, pouring water from its mouth down into the well.

Teverak insists that the entrance to the tomb is in the well, though he refuses to enter the tomb with the PCs, after his previous experience there. He does warn the PCs about the creature (he thinks it's a water elemental) at the bottom of the well. He waits in the cave for their return, preparing himself for the eventual confrontation with the weakened PCs.

The well shaft plunges 120 feet into the ground, where it ends in a thirty-foot-square chamber. Along the walls, dozens of tubes bring water from other areas of the mountain to feed the well. Pipes at the base carry the unused water to an underground river. The walls are rough and can be scaled with a DC 15 Climb check.

In order to enter the tomb, the PCs must break through the floor of the well chamber. The simplest method is to simply break it, but there are 2-inch-square holes for the water to drain through that might be passable with magic.

Stone Floor: 3 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 45; break DC 30.

Creature: The bottom of the well is guarded by an evil water avatar called a waterveiled assassin. Its malleable form allows it to travel through the drains at the bottom of the well, and it usually resides in the chamber below. If it senses any disturbance in the well above, it moves up and attacks. The assassin resembles a Large water elemental, its

form constantly churning and swirling in a violent torrent.

WATERVEILED ASSASSIN **CR 15**
NE Large elemental (extraplanar, water)
Monster Manual IV 13
Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 feet., blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +20, Spot +20
Languages Aquan, Common

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 19
hp 169 (26 HD); fast healing 5 **DR** 10/—
Immune elemental traits
SR 23
Fort +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13; liquid body

Spd 30 ft.; swim 60 ft.
Melee slam +26 (4d8+10)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +30
Atk Options Combat Reflexes
Special Actions churn 5d6 (DC 30 Fortitude half), engulf (DC 30)

Abilities Str 25, Dex 23, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12
SQ malleable form, one with water
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Initative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Hide), Skill Focus (Move Silently), Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Hide +19, Listen +20, Move Silently +23, Spot +20, Swim +15

Liquid Body (Ex) A waterveiled assassin exercises supreme control over its watery form, allowing it to flow around and avoid area effects. Any spell or effect that allows a Reflex save for half damage has a 50% chance to have no effect on a waterveiled assassin.

Malleable Form (Ex) A waterveiled assassin's control over its form allows it to flow through tiny cracks in objects and move through the earth, walls, and other obstacles. The assassin moves at normal speed through terrain that slows movement. It can move through permeable objects at half speed, but it cannot move through completely solid barriers (such as a *wall of stone*). If the assassin ends its movement while it is completely within an object, opponents do not have line of sight or line of effect to it. Its reach drops to 0 feet, and any creatures engulfed within the creature (see below) fall out, dropping prone at the edge of the object. If only part of the creature is within an object, but its remaining space cannot hold all the creatures within it, the assassin chooses which ones to release.

Churn (Ex) As a swift action, a waterveiled assassin can create mighty currents within its body that grind engulfed creatures, dealing 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage. An engulfed creature that succeeds on a DC 30 Fortitude save takes half damage.

Engulf (Ex) As a standard action, a waterveiled assassin can flow over Medium or smaller creatures, entrapping them within its liquid form. This ability is identical to the engulf ability of a gelatinous cube (*Monster Manual* 202), except that it takes a DC 30 Reflex save to avoid being engulfed. Engulfed creatures are subject to the assassin's churn attack, and may drown.

One With Water (Ex) A waterveiled assassin can simply disappear into water. An assassin in a volume of water at least 15 feet wide, 15 feet long, and 15 feet deep is invisible, and remains invisible even if it attacks.

T1. Bajak's Statue

Beneath the false bottom of the well lies an ancient chamber that seems to be undisturbed. A twelve-foot-tall marble statue rests atop a plinth in an ornate pond in the center of the room. The statue is of a dwarven warlord clutching a magnificent and oversized greatclub in two hands and draped in the finest armor and jewelry. At the base of the statue, dwarven runes have been carved into a bronze plaque to commemorate the warrior.

Depending on whether the PCs destroyed the base of the well or bypassed it through other means, the elegant fountain attached to the ceiling that gently sprays water around the statue and into the pond may or may not remain intact. A DC 30 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check is enough to recognize the greatclub as a carving of *Darsam-tor-ews*.

The inscription on the statue is in Dwarven, and reads: "Long rest the brave and just Bajak Thunderfist in his hall of stone, blessed by the mountains that gave him life and honored by the descendents he left behind."

A secret panel on the back of his left gauntlet (Search DC 30) opens to reveal a small switch that causes the floor that surrounds the fountain (but not the fountain itself) to slowly retract into the wall, revealing a deep shaft that plunges into the heart of the mountain.

T2. The Entry Shaft (EL 9)

The shaft provides entry to the tomb proper. The inside of the shaft contains stone blocks that have been attached to the wall with steel rods that allow water from the fountain to flow between them and the shaft wall. They wind around the shaft and form a spiral staircase leading down.

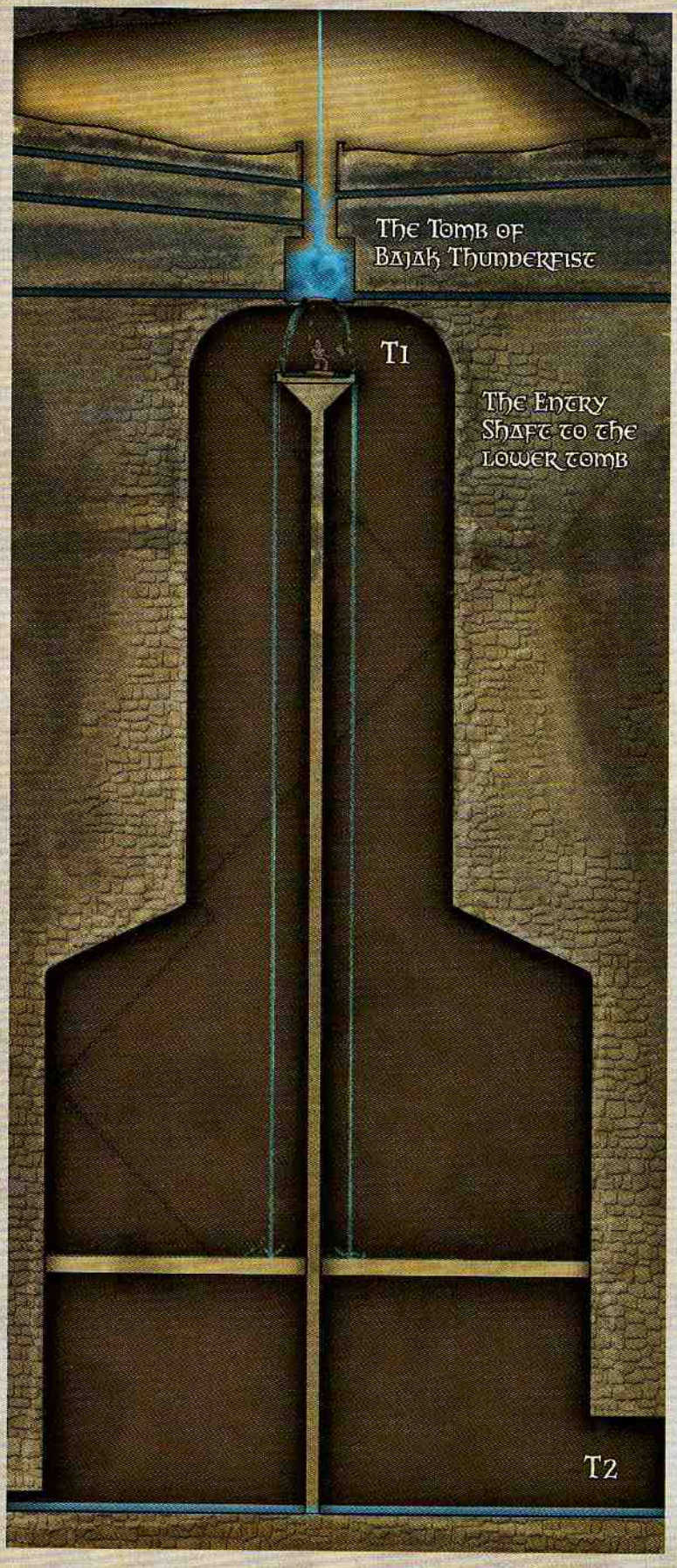
The shaft descends 600 feet before reaching a large pool of water. The stairway continues into the water, which is 30 feet deep. At the base of the stairway (underwater) is a hidden lever (Search DC 25) which opens up an iris in the center of the pool that dumps the water into a chamber below. Anyone in the pool when the iris opens can resist the current with a DC 25 Swim check, or hang onto the walls with a DC 15 Strength check. Otherwise, they are swept into the room below, and plummet 30 feet onto an iron grate. The water drains through the grate into an underground river, but the chamber itself is part of the tomb. When the PCs arrive in the chamber below the iris, read the following:

Alcoves have been carved into the white marble walls of this chamber at regular intervals. Within the alcoves, statues of Bajak pose in different conquering styles, with the dwarf showing his domination over a dozen various creatures, from dragons to elves. A set of decorated marbled double doors stands in one wall.

There is little in the chamber of interest to the PCs, but Bajak holds *Darsam-tor-ews* in every pose.

Trap: The marbled doors are locked (Open Lock DC 30) and trapped to fend off tomb robbers.

***Symbol of Death* Trap:** CR 9; spell; spell-trigger; no reset; spell-effect (*symbol*



Bajak Thunderfist's Curse

When the tomb of Bajak Thunderfist was completed, all of the workers were thrown into the pits (area **T5**) to die. A powerful cleric of Nerull was commissioned via a large bribe to curse the crypt, and as a part of the commission the workers were cursed to forever guard the crypt against intruders.

Should any of the PCs attempt to pass through any of the walls or enter the Ethereal Plane, the spirits swarm them in a ravenous fury. In order to pass through a wall, PCs are required to make a DC 22 a Strength check to force their way through the wall of tortured souls.

Each round that the PC are on the Ethereal Plane or attempt to pass through a wall, they are assaulted by the spirits and must make 2d6 DC 24 Fortitude saves. Each failed save results in 1d4 points of Strength drain. Should a PC drop to 0 Strength in the Ethereal Plane, or midway through a wall, the spirits continue their assault by dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain until the victim dies.

of death; 18th-level wizard); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

T3. Bridge over the Silver Stream (EL 16)

An elegantly carved stone bridge arches over a slow-drifting river. Across the span the ledge on the opposite side sports a twenty-foot-tall statue of Bajak, with a pair of iron doors between its legs.

The bridge is ten feet wide but has no handrails.

Creature: After the PCs recover *Darsam-tor-ews* and pass between the statue's legs, it animates to prevent them from leaving.

Greater Stone Golem: hp 271; *Monster Manual* 137.

T4. The Avenue of Glory (EL 16)

A raised platform leads down into a chamber full of statues. Flanking the iron door are two dwarven warriors, while another

statue of Bajak sits prominently in the center of the chamber. Behind him are dozens of smaller statues of dwarves, each bearing a plaque.

Each of the statues behind Bajak represents one of his warriors that fell in the final battle that claimed his life. Each of their bodies was cremated and inserted into the corresponding statue, with each of the names engraved onto the bronze plaques that they hold.

Creatures: When the PCs first enter the chamber nothing threatens them, but if they try to leave with *Darsamtor-ews*, the cursed spirits of six of the entombed dwarves rise from their statues to stop them.

Dread Wraiths (6): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 258.

T5. The Worker's Crypts

Beneath the statues in area **T4** lie two secret trap doors (Search DC 20) that lead to 60-foot-deep shafts. When the tomb was completed, Bajak's son threw all of the workers into these pits and arranged for an evil cleric to curse their bodies. Now, their spirits dwell in the walls of the crypt and protect it against thieves.

Anyone that enters the pits hears the distant wailing of the spirits that are fused into the walls of the crypt. Should the PCs collect all of the skeletons that lie within the pits and give them proper dwarven burials, the curse is broken.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: If they succeed in breaking the curse, give the PCs a CR 15 experience award.

T6. Bajak's Treasure Chamber (EL 16)

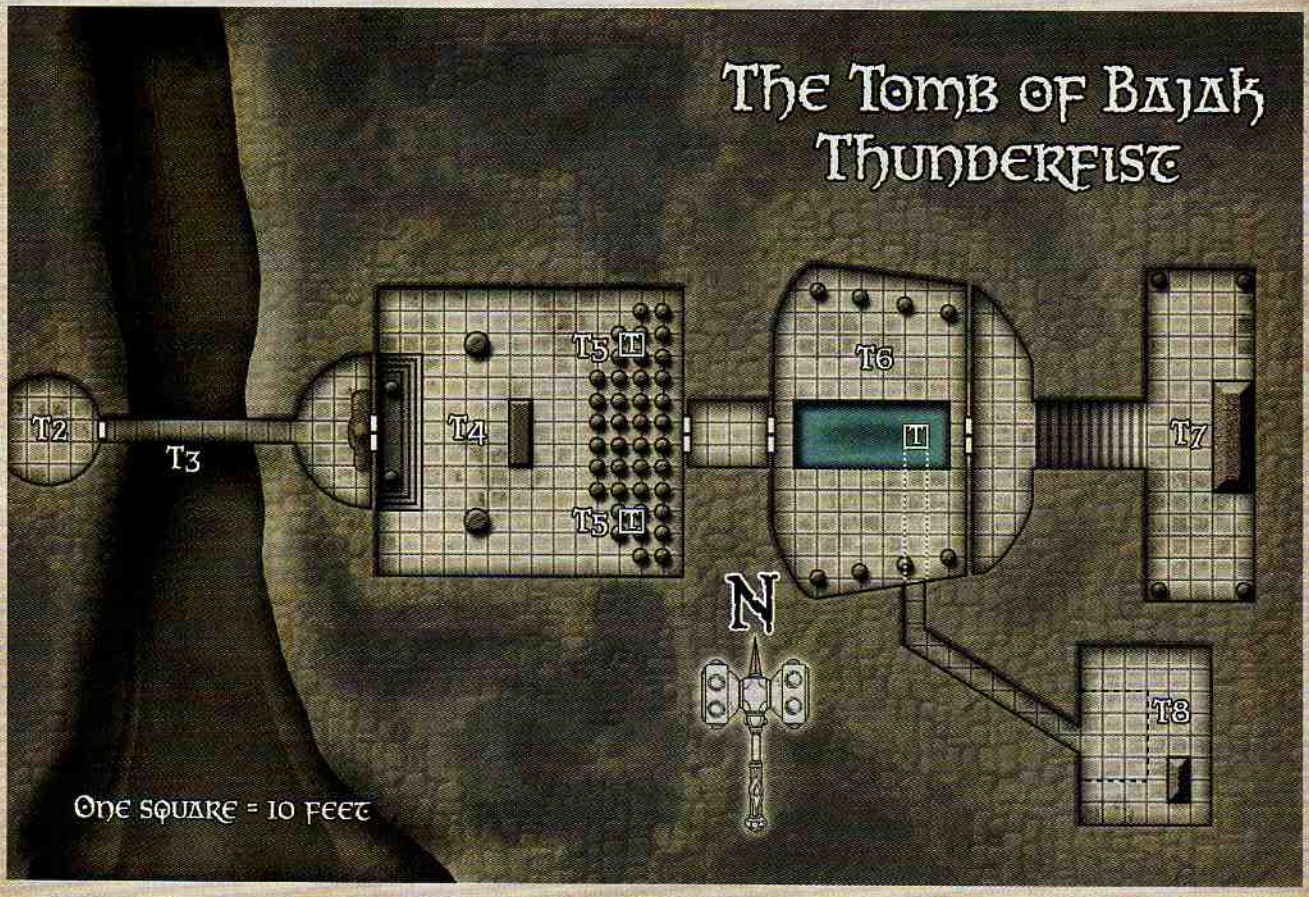
The great iron doors to this chamber are locked (Open Lock DC 30).

This is a glorious chamber filled with treasure. The center of the room sports an oaken carriage fit for royalty, drawn by two beautiful marble horses. Flanking the carriage are ten large brass urns decorated with imagery of celestial dwarven feasts, all filled to the brim with coins and jewels. Hanging above the carriage are two breathtaking female angels carved from marble and playing harps of gold.

Creatures: Within this chamber lies the treasure Bajak's son buried for his father to take into the next world, as well as the guardians he set to defend it. The two stone horses are actually cauchemars, held in *temporal stasis* that ends when the tomb doors are opened and disguised with a *permanent image* (these effects operate at CL 18). The angels on the roof have been similarly bound and are actually erinyes rogues.

When the door opens, the *temporal stasis* fades, releasing the creatures. The cauchemars attack the PCs immediately, but the erinyes rogues use stealth and guile to defend their master's tomb, attacking from a distance and using their special abilities.

Angels of Death (2) **CR 13**
Female erinyes rogue 10



LE Medium outsider (baatezu, evil, extraplanar, lawful)
Monster Manual 54
Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, true seeing; Listen +26, Spot +26
Languages Infernal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 29, touch 21, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility, improved uncanny dodge
hp 208 (19 HD); **DR** 5/good
Immune fire, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 20
Fort +16, **Ref** +21, **Will** +13; improved evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)
Melee +1 *longsword* +24/+19/+14/+9 (1d8+8/19–20)
Ranged +2 *flaming composite longbow* +26/+21/+16/+11 (1d8+9/19–20/×3 plus 1d6 fire) or
Manyshot +2 *flaming composite longbow* +18/+18/+18/+18 (1d8+9/19–20/×3 plus 1d6 fire) or
Rapid Shot +2 *flaming composite longbow* +24/+24/+19/+14/+9 (1d8+9/19–20/×3 plus 1d6 fire) or
rope +24 (entangle)
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +23
Atk Options Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, sneak attack +5d6
Special Actions entangle, *summon baatezu*
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of invisibility*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *charm monster* (DC 20), *minor image* (DC 18), *unholy blight* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 26, Con 24, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 22
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +3
Feats Dodge, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run
Skills Concentration +19, Diplomacy +28, Escape Artist +30, Hide +30, Knowledge (local) +23, Listen +26, Move Silently +30, Search +23, Spot +26, Tumble +18
Possessions combat gear, +2 *flaming composite longbow* (+7 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 *longsword*, *bracers of armor* +3, ivory collar decorated with images of enraptured souls set with eight bloodstones worth 2,500 gp, coil of silk rope

Nightmare, Cauchemar (2): hp 172 each; *Monster Manual* 194.

Trap: The doors leading into area **T17** trigger a trap that causes the rear of the carriage to open and fire magical arrows at would-be thieves. If the trap is found and disabled, 25 +1 *unholy arrows* can be salvaged from the mechanism.

Fusillade of Arrows Trap: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; atk +1 *unholy arrows* +21 ranged (1d8+9/x3 plus 2d6 unholy); multiple targets (1d4 arrows per target in a 10-ft.-wide area between the carriage and the door) Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 32.

Treasure: The ten urns mentioned above are all filled with treasure left behind for Bajak's afterlife. Contained within the urns are 64,560 cp, 46,382 sp, 12,679 gp, 1,540 pp, thirty-two zircons (60 gp each), twenty-four red garnets (110 gp each), sixteen alexandrines (580 gp each), five emeralds (1,000 gp each), two pink diamonds (5,000 gp each), a *stone of weight* which looks like a large emerald, a *pearl of power* (4th-level) on a slender silver chain, a *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone*, a slender silver necklace draped with hanging chains decorated with tiny diamonds (6,800 gp), sixteen golden rings (65 gp each), and three golden beer steins decorated with images of dwarven revelry (100 gp each). Enterprising PCs that remove the ancient carriage from its resting place may be able to sell it to a historian or collector for up to 10,000 gp (although the rear of the carriage is trapped, see area **T8** below).

T7. The False Tomb (EL 14)

The large, iron double doors to this chamber are locked with an *arcane lock* (CL 16th) as well as an amazing lock (Open Lock DC 40). A cunning Trap also protects the doors.

A set of stairs climbs high onto a platform that rests in the center of this enormous chamber. Four pillars decorated with magical flame shed light upon the impressive marble coffin, an image of Bajak on its lid.

The well-protected doors are designed to convince intruders that this is the resting place of Bajak Thunderfist.

Creature: A monstrous undead creature stumbled across this chamber during the centuries since it was built, and now makes its home here. This nightwing swoops in to attack the PCs as they investigate the coffin, attempting to drag them into the darkness.

Nightwing: hp 144; *Monster Manual* 197.

Treasure: Within the ancient coffer lies a skeleton of one of the workers that constructed the tomb. The skeleton wears a suit of +1 *full plate* and holds a +2 *greataxe*. The crypt also contains a *cloak of resistance* +1, seven engraved golden rings (worth 70 gp each), a silver scroll case (worth 80 gp and containing scrolls of *greater scrying*, *baleful polymorph*, *passwall*, *cloudkill*, *greater heroism*, and *flesh to stone*), and a solid-gold amulet dedicated to Moradin with two agates set into it (worth 300 gp).

This paltry treasure was left behind to placate robbers and allow them to leave without considering the prospect of a second tomb (whose entrance is located beneath the carriage in area **T6**). Since the body does not possess *Darsam-torews*, it should be obvious to the PCs that it is a fake.

T8. The Real Tomb (EL 16)

The secret trapdoor leading to this tomb is hidden beneath the carriage (DC 32 Search to locate), and opens to an 80-foot drop to a passageway below.

At the end of the passageway is a *permanent image* (CL 18th) of a small chamber containing off-cuts of stone, rusted chunks of iron, and discarded workman's tools as well as an *illusionary wall* (also CL 18th) which blocks off the coffin-area. If the PCs penetrate the illusion, read the following:

Here lies a beautifully decorated chamber lined with bronze panels that detail the accomplishments of Bajak Thunderfist's life and conquests. In the center of the chamber is a magnificent white marble coffin carved with motifs of eternity and the afterlife.

Bajak's spirit is as paranoid in death as he was in life, never truly passing on as he eternally worries about the safety of his wealth. PCs that approach his coffin have to deal with the hostile spirit before they can retrieve the greatclub. Due to the greed that has wracked him every day since his death, his spirit has transformed into a vicious, twisted parody of his former self.

BAJAK THUNDERFIST **CR 16**

Male dwarf ghost fighter 14

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Monster Manual 116

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8

Aura corrupting gaze, horrific appearance

Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 27; Dodge, Mobility

hp 105 (14 HD)

Immune incorporeal traits, undead traits

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4 (+2 vs. spells)

Weakness AC 13 (touch 2, flat-footed 12) against ranged attacks

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Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee* *Darsam-Tor-Ews* +20/+15/+10 (1d10+22 plus 2d6 axiomatic)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** —

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack

*4-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con —, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 22

SQ manifestation, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (greatclub), Greater Weapon Specialization (greatclub), Improved Critical (greatclub), Improved Sunder, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Leadership, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub)

Skills Hide +4, Intimidate +23, Listen +8, Search +7, Spot +8

Possessions *Darsam-Tor-Ews, +3 ghost touch arrow-attracting full plate, cloak of Charisma +4*

Corrupting Gaze (Su) 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage, 30 feet, DC 21 Fortitude negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Horrific Appearance (Su) Any living creature within 60 feet of Bajak must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by it again for 24 hours.

Tactics: As Bajak rises to defend his wealth he immediately uses his horrific appearance and corrupting gaze on the PC closest to his coffin. He follows this with liberal use of Power Attack and Spring Attack (leaping through walls to escape counter-attacks). If he takes serious damage from spell casters he moves through the floor behind the party to counter attack.

Treasure: Within Bajak's coffin lies the mighty warlord's skeleton, draped with the personal effects that he was buried in (including the equipment listed in his stat block above). In addition to his personal equipment he also was buried

with an *elixir of love*, an elegant golden crown set with four rubies (worth 8,500 gp), fabulous but now rotted noble's garb, a small ivory-paneled mahogany chest depicting images of war-elephants (worth 950 gp) containing 600 pp, and six diamonds (worth 800 gp each).

Leaving Bajak's Tomb

When the PCs retrieve the mythical greatclub *Darsam-tor-ews* from Bajak's hands, they must still return to the surface to meet with Teverak. When the PCs return, he is extremely grateful and promises that they will be greeted as heroes when they return to Khun-drukar.

When the PCs give Teverak the hammer he uses his *cape of the mountebank* to flee without saying another word, disappearing into the mountains at top speed. Nearby, he has a trained ambush drake waiting. He feeds it a *potion of invisibility*, then drinks one himself. Within half an hour he is in Carradoc's presence with the *Soulhammer* they require to open the great vault doors.

The PCs may suspect Teverak's treachery and call his bluff, forcing him to attempt to steal it from them. If he is captured or killed then the PCs will have retrieved *Darsam-tor-ews* for themselves, and may return it to the clergy within Khun-drukar safely. In this instance, Carradoc sends his minions to steal the greatclub from them. Unless the PCs remain extremely vigilant, Carradoc eventually manages to obtain the artifact (although he never comes himself to get the relic). Alternately, the PCs may decide to go after the elven druid simply to put a stop to his neverending thievery attempts.

Chapter Two: The Darkness Within

It shouldn't take the PCs long to realize they've been duped. A visit to Khun-drukar reveals not only that no one's heard of Teverak, but that they also had no idea that *Darsam-tor-ews* was missing. If the PCs need a little extra incentive to track down Teverak and recover the artifact, feel free to have Khun-drukar city officials offer them a reward for the artifact's safe return. Once the PCs decide to track Teverak down, they face the difficult task of uncovering his location and motives. Fortunately, the PCs should have access to magic that can warn them of the coming danger.

Greater scrying, discern location, find the path, commune, commune with nature, and other similar spells can help the PCs figure out what has happened, what Carradoc is planning, and where he is hiding.

The Vault of Gyrand Diamonmer

Far from the frequented trails of the Tormars, Carradoc discovered the resting place of Khun-mar-dornar deep beneath Bright Mountain. He also discovered many underground denizens that shared his hatred of the dwarves. Few were suitable for the task he had in mind, until he stumbled across a small monastery that overlooked a cavern of quartz. Within he discovered a mind flayer with exceptional psionic prowess.

With a new ally, Carradoc returned to the remote mountainside where the vault lay hidden and spent the next several years excavating it with his charmed minions. Eventually, they unearthed the collapsed tunnels that led to the vault, and now many of the survivors have been placed on alert at strategic places underground to defend the vault until the door can be opened.

Due to the magical effects that surround the Khun-mar-dornar, the entire complex is warded with a *dimensional lock* effect that cannot be dispelled while the vault door remains closed. It is, however, briefly deactivated once every hundred years (see area **M20** below), a fact that Carradoc has not discovered.

M1. Into the Depths of Bright Mountain (EL 14)

Near the base of one of the largest mountains in the Tormars are obvious signs of a recent excavation. A large sloped pit has been bored into the ground amid a grove of pine trees that shelter the area from falling snow.

Darsam-Tor-Ews

The name of this minor artifact translates to "*Celestial Soulhammer*," yet despite its name, the weapon is in fact a powerful greatclub. Fully six feet long, *Darsam-tor-ews* was forged from a single block of adamantine in the dwarven heavens over the course of several decades, a gift for one of Moradin's most holy clerics, a man named Gyrand Diamonmer. Its grip is wrapped in black dragon hide and etched with dwarven runes of strength, whilst the far end is carved to resemble an immense dragon's head.

The weapon is a *+4 axiomatic ghost touch adamantine greatclub* that grants its wielder the Improved Sunder feat. As an adamantine weapon, it ignores the hardness on all objects less than 20, making it highly effective at smashing weapons wielded by its foes. Although its threat range and multiplier for critical hits is no different than any other greatclub, *Darsam-tor-ews* can critically hit constructs, inflicting tremendous damage on such creatures on a critical hit even though these beings are normally immune to such damage. Other precision-based damage bonuses (such as sneak attack) are not so empowered against constructs struck by the greatclub.

Darsam-tor-ews grants its wielder the ability to cast *knock* three times a day as a 20th-level caster.

Strong evocation and transmutation; CL 20th; Weight 12 lb.

It was here that Carradoc discerned the location of Khun-mar-dornar, and with the assistance of burrowing creatures, began his long descent into the earth. The tunnel quickly changes from an earthen structure into rock plates that act as crude stairs into the barren cavern below.

Carradoc set several of his allies here to guard against any intrusion. PCs that approach the entrance are be set upon by guardian treants.

Treants (9): hp 66 each; *Monster Manual* 244.

M2. Caverns of the Bright Mountain

DARSAM-TOR-EWS

At the base of the rock formation that serves as a crude staircase into the earth, a large cave opens into the mountainside. Scattered haphazardly across the floor are dozens of dwarven skeletons left behind by carnivorous predators. Savage teeth and claw marks are obvious upon the stripped bones.

This chamber is empty apart from the discarded remains of the meals of Carradoc's minions. A DC 18 Survival check made by a character with the Track feat determines that tracks in the chamber are fresh. A DC 18 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the tracks as those left by an extraordinarily large pair of umber hulks.

M3. Umber Hulk Lair (EL 16)

The walls of this cavern are riddled with smaller tunnels that delve deep into the bedrock on either side. A slight rumbling can be felt within the chamber, and the overpowering stench of decay comes from several dead dwarven prospectors that lie partially devoured in the center of the cave.

At the rear of the chamber is a secret door constructed of iron with a false rock face attached to it. It takes a DC 24 Search check to find the door, and a DC 28 Open Lock check to unlock it.

Creatures: These umber hulks usually do not associate closely with each other, but Carradoc's honeyed promises coupled with the dozens of dwarven bodies he has provided them encourage cooperation. The monstrous aberrations clamber out of their tunnels to tear apart any intruders.

Truly Horrid Umber Hulks (2): hp 270 each; *Monster Manual* 249.

Treasure: Deep within the tunnels surrounding this chamber, the umber hulks have hidden several dwarven corpses for later consumption. A DC 22 Search of these corpses turns up a *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10th, 30 charges) as well as a pouch of 13 moonstones worth 80 gp each.

M4. A Bridge Too Far (EL 16)

At the far side of this cavern, an elegantly constructed wrought-iron bridge spans an underground chasm. Pillars carved into the likenesses of dwarven dancers support the handrails. The floor of the bridge is a grate opening into the depths of the gulf beneath. The wind whistles and moans as it passes through the holes on the bridge.

This gorge is constantly buffeted by severe winds (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 95).

Creature: Deep within the chasm two ambush drakes perch upon a rock shelf guarding the bridge. These creatures were discovered as hatchlings and trained to obey Carradoc's every order. An ambush drake is a dog-like draconic creature with stunted wings and an elongated jaw. They open combat with their breath weapon and follow it up with Flyby Attacks.

Murdermaw and Scattergut **CR 14**
Advanced ambush drakes
NE Large dragon
Monster Manual III 8
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +19, Spot +19
Languages Common, Draconic; telepathic link

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 18
hp 200 (16 HD)
Immune sleep, paralysis
SR 16
Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

Spd 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)
Melee bite +23 (3d6+8 plus poison) and 2 claws +21 (2d6+4)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +28
Atk Options Flyby Attack
Special Actions breath weapon

Abilities Str 26, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9
Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Flyby Attack, Multiattack
Skills Hide +20, Listen +19, Move Silently +20, Spot +19

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds, slow (duration 7 rounds), Will DC 26 negates. Ambush drakes are immune to the breath weapons of other ambush drakes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 24, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Telepathic Link (Ex) Ambush drakes share a communal consciousness, enabling them to communicate telepathically with other ambush drakes. A group of ambush drakes within 30 feet of each other are in constant contact. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in the group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No ambush drake in the group is considered flanked unless they all are.

M5. Chamber of Music (EL 16)

A haunting melody reminiscent of gently played flutes and pipes drifts through this cavern. A ledge winds around the rim of this chamber, while the center is nothing more than a vast pit that drops away into darkness. In the middle of the pit, a small pinnacle of rock ends in a level platform several feet below the level of the ledge. On this platform rests a magnificent marble statue of a dragon coiled around a naked nymph holding a set of panpipes.

The music comes from the statue on the platform, but its accompaniment drifts from the darkness below. The bottom of the pit contains six more statues that fell into the depths years ago and were dashed to pieces against the rocks, although the stone instruments survived.

Creatures: This area has been the home of several air elementals for decades. They enjoy manipulating the air currents to create melodies they find pleasant, only slightly interested in the various bribes the druid offered them to protect him from the PCs and other interlopers. Intruders can pass through this chamber safely if they can create a suitable musical accompaniment to the haunting melody with a DC 25 Perform check. Otherwise, the air elementals attack.

Elder Air Elementals (6): hp 204 each; *Monster Manual* 95.

M6. The Hidden Ledge

This gracefully constructed stone ledge sports well-crafted handrails. It seems that once a bridge spanned the gorge beneath the ledge, but has long since fallen away. A similar ledge stands on the far side of the gap.

The gap is 60 feet wide. The same windstorm from area **M4** also blows through this part of the gorge.

M7. The Tale of Gyrand Diamonmer

The walls of this carved chamber are covered in a vast bas-relief of a dwarven community in differing stages of development.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge check is good enough to recognize the images on the walls as a history of Khun-drukar. The chronicle is given from the perspective of Gyrand Diamonmer, and includes the discovery of Khun-mar-dornar as well as an image of the dwarven hero sealing the tree away using the power of his faith and his mythical weapon given to him by Moradin.

M8. The Hidey Hole

This small chamber is snuggled nicely behind a secret door that leads to area **M10**, though on this side it is far from secret. Anyone can easily use the secret door to access area **M10**, but from the other side it takes a DC 25 Search check to find the door.

From here, several peepholes allow people to spy into **M10**, designed by the dwarves to serve as a fortified position but never truly finished, much like the rest of this area.

M9. The Barracks (EL 14)

Within this large chamber are dozens of soiled straw mats and burnt-out fires. The chamber looks recently occupied; whoever has moved in has only done so in the past few days.

Creatures: Carradoc has prepared for this day for years, and the eventual necessity for physical labor and protection was something that he despised but regrettably obtained as a contingency against any dwarves that got wind of his project.

These mercenaries did not come cheaply or easily, but persistence allowed Carradoc to acquire unquestioning brutes that could serve both as excavators and protection as the need arose. Now that his use for them is over, Carradoc is considering killing them all for taking the gold that he used to bribe them, for he believes that greed is the worst of all vices.

Ogre Barbarian 4 (10): hp 79 each; *Monster Manual* 198.

Treasure: Each of the ogres has a small sack containing 500 gp and three large moonstones (worth 150 gp each) that was their hiring fee, with a promise of more to come.

M10. Carradoc's Violet Defenses (EL 15)

The tunnel opens into a wide chamber, with another tunnel on the far side. The floor, walls, and ceiling of the chamber are covered with a disgusting mold and a moss-like substance. Massive purple mushrooms protrude from the purveying fungus at regular intervals around the room. Several large clusters of boulders and debris have been covered by this growth, and it seems there is no way to cross the chamber without walking through it.

Creatures: Carradoc "transplanted" several of his favorite pets into this room to guard the passage to the lower part of the cave. These six behemoth violet fungi are scattered throughout this chamber.

Behemoth Violet Fungi (6) **CR 10**
N Huge plant
Monster Manual 112
Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1
AC 15, touch 6, flat-footed 15
hp 310 (20 HD)
Immune plant traits
Fort +23, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7
Spd 10 ft.
Melee 4 tentacles +26 (2d6+13 plus poison)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +36
Abilities Str 36, Dex 7, Con 32, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 9
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 31; initial and secondary damage 1d8 Strength and 1d8 Constitution.

M11. The Rock Larder (EL 12)

Down a short flight of crudely constructed stairs the tunnel opens into a cavern partially filled with discarded rubble.

Within the chamber lurk two fire giants that Carradoc stumbled across in the Tomars several years ago. After a short display of power, the wily elf bargained for their services, promising them wealth plundered from an ancient dwarven tomb, which he convinced them was behind the vault doors. If the caverns have been warned of the PCs' arrival (likely if Teverak escaped earlier in the module), the giants await the PCs and ambush them as they enter the adjoining room. Otherwise, they lean back in this chamber and talk about what they are going to do with their share of the loot.

Fire Giant Mercenaries (3): hp 142 each; *Monster Manual* 121.

Treasure: Each of the giants were paid with small chests containing 2,000 gp, 100 pp, and sixteen bloodstones (150 gp each), in addition to their standard gear.

M12. The Eternal Prison

This cavern is dotted with dozens of stalactites and stalagmites that stretch from the ceiling and floor in a seemingly desperate attempt to reach each other.

As the PCs approach, they may make a DC 15 Spot check to see shadows within the stalagmites. These shadows are the last traces of people that were chained to the floor of this cavern ages ago. The skeletons are perfectly preserved within their natural prisons, the rock keeping the bodies safe from casual looters and predators that might distrub their bones. The skeletons are easily a thousand years old.

M13. Carradoc's Chambers (EL 8)

The corridor leading to this room contains a magical Trap (see below).

This cavern is decorated with crude furnishings that look like they have been dragged through miles of undergrowth before arriving this chamber. Crude blankets, candles, wine glasses and bottles, and dozens of other miscellaneous items are placed around the somewhat homey cavern.

Carradoc's chambers were outfitted by the ogres after they ambushed a dwarven caravan containing furniture and trade goods. The elf left the ogres to fight over the money stolen while he claimed the furniture for himself.

Within one chest is a collection of herbs, liquids, minerals and other equipment necessary for the druid to brew potions. Carradoc has little use for material treasure, but has collected a few items of beauty over the years.

Trap: The druid placed a magical trap outside his chamber to protect it from intruders.

***Firestorm* Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic

reset; password bypass ("perfection"); spell effect (*firestorm*, 18th-level druid, 18d6 fire damage, DC 24 Reflex save half); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Treasure: Scattered about the room among Carradoc's personal trinkets are a few valuable items that can be found with a DC 20 Search check: a single dragon's tooth carved into the image of a soaring eagle (worth 600 gp), a ring woven of unicorn hair set with a piece of coral carved into a rose (worth 2,800 gp), an oaken statuette of a beautiful elven maiden in spring (Carradoc's dead wife, worth 500 gp), and a silken pouch woven with silver thread containing six pearls (the pearls are worth 100 gp each while the pouch is worth 50 gp).

M14. A Boulder Graveyard (EL 14)

The tunnel ahead winds down into a large cavern that is covered in neatly placed boulders. On the far side of the cavern, a cave-in has blocked further progress into the mountain.

One of Carradoc's more ingenious ploys was to lure the elders of a galeb duhr community away from the safety of their home on the Elemental Plane of Earth to this cavern. They have been convinced that interlopers intend to use the planar rift in this mountain to invade their home, and now guard this chamber against intruders.

Galeb duhrs appear to be living boulders with two dark, brooding eyes, a mouth, and rough-hewn stubby appendages that serve as hands and feet.

Galeb Duhrs (6) **CR 9**

N Medium elemental (earth, extraplanar)
Monster Manual II 107
Init –3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense, Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Terran

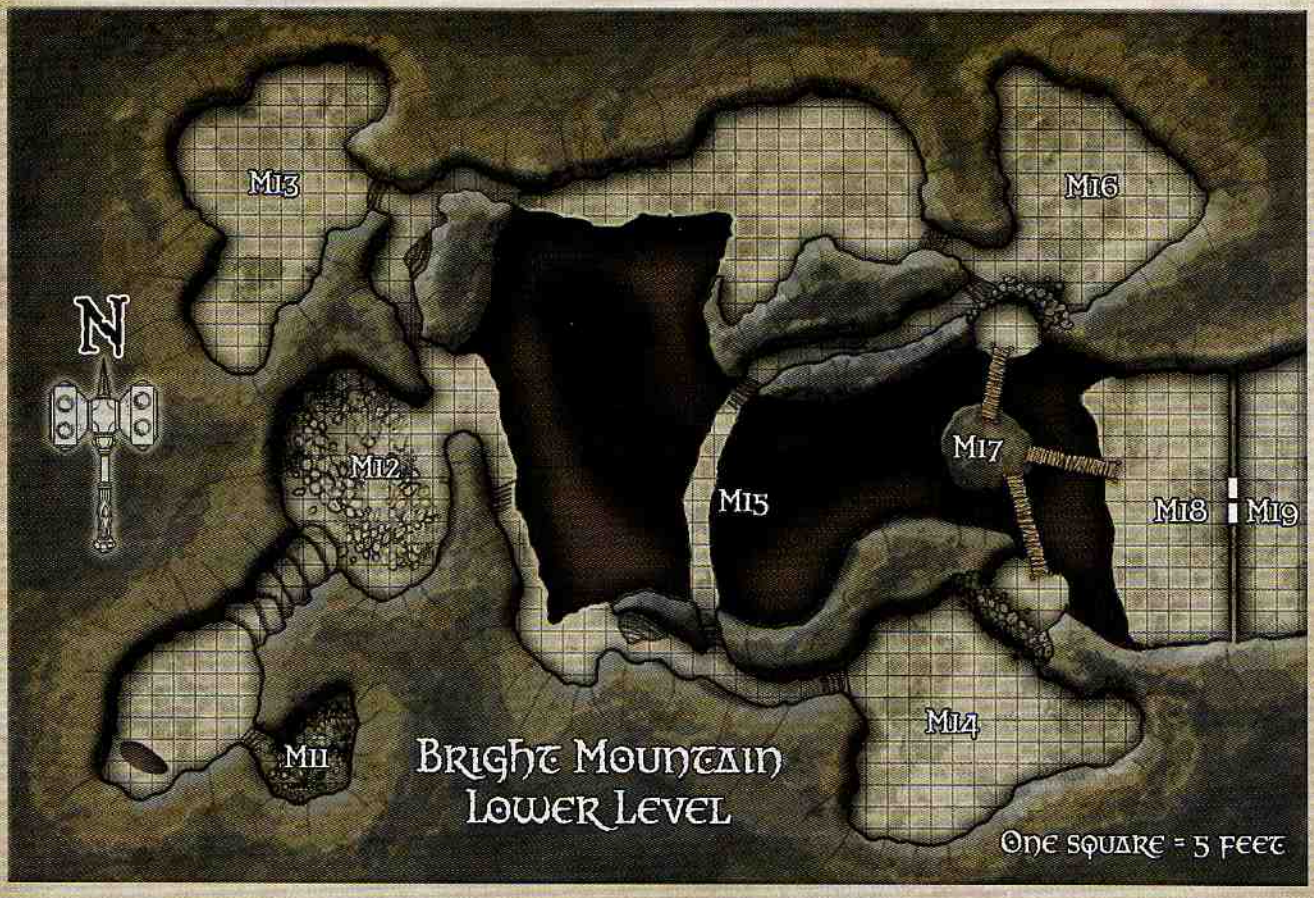
AC 22, touch 7, flat-footed 22
hp 76 (8 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune elemental traits
SR 21
Fort +11, **Ref** –1, **Will** +7
Spd 10 ft., burrow 10 ft.
Melee 2 slams +7 (1d8+1)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +7
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At will—*animate objects* (stone only), *stone shape*
1/day—*move earth*, *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of stone*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 5, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 12
SQ freeze
Feats Combat Casting, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will
Skills Concentration +9, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perform (sing) +7, Sense Motive +9

Freeze (Ex) A galeb duhr can hold itself so still that it appears to be a boulder. An observer must make a DC 30 Spot check to notice that it is really alive.

Animated Boulder **CR —**

N Gargantuan construct
Monster Manual 14
Init –2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen –5, Spot –5



AC 12, touch 4, flat-footed 12
hp 148 (16 HD); hardness 8
Immune construct traits
Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Spd 10 ft.
Melee slam +15 (2d8+10)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +31
Abilities Str 24, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Tactics: When the PCs enter the room, the galeb duhrs use their freeze ability to blend in with the rest of the boulders around the cavern. As soon as the PCs enter the room, each uses its *animate objects* ability to animate one of the real boulders. They continue to do this each round until their ruse is discovered, at which point half of them enter melee combat, while the other half continue to animate boulders. If four of them are killed, the other two surrender.

Development: If the PCs can convince the galeb duhrs that they have no interest in the Elemental Plane of Earth before combat begins, they can negotiate safe passage past them (their initial attitude is hostile).

M15. A Tenuous Link

The ancient bridge that spans the chasm here is structurally sound as long as the PCs cross one at a time. The windstorm that blows continuously throughout the cavern also sweeps across this bridge. In addition to the constant wind, every minute or so a hurricane force gust sweeps through this chamber (10% chance every round). The chasm is 450 feet deep.

M16. A Purple Surprise (EL 14)

This chamber is one of two that access the vault entrance.

Creatures: In order to defend the area, Carradoc lured two purple worms here using summoned animals as bait. The worms still lurk in the area, influenced only slightly by the charms that lace their thoughts and awaiting the chance to devour a creature that will fill their gullets.

Purple Worms (2): hp 200 each; *Monster Manual* 211.

M17. An Ancient Ally (EL 17)

In the center of the vast chasm that dominates the cave system stands a single pillar that juts fiercely from the unfathomable depths. Three rope bridges lead across the chasm to the platform from nearby ledges.

The same windstorm effect present in area **M15** is also present here.

As the PCs have steadily gained access into the depths of Khunmar-dornar, they have most likely come to the attention of Carradoc's minions. Now that they are so close to thwarting his plans, an old enemy awaits the PCs here. If Teverak escaped earlier in the adventure, he awaits the PCs near the bridge along with the druid's most capable servant, the mind flayer Xamanthar.

Xamanthar **CR 14**
Mind flayer monk 10
LE Medium aberration
Monster Manual 186

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +26, Spot +26
Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Terran, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 32, touch 24, flat-footed 27
hp 135 (18 HD)
Immune nonmagical disease
SR 35
Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; improved evasion, still mind

Spd 60 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +18/+18/+13/+8 (2d6/19–20) and 4 tentacles +13 (1d4)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +17
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip, Stunning Fist (13/day, DC 20), improved grab (tentacle)
Special Actions extract, *mind blast* (DC 21), wholeness of body (20 hp/day)
Combat Gear *potions of fly* (2), *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2)
Psionics (CL 8th)
At will—*charm monster* (DC 19), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *levitate*, *plane shift* (DC 22), *suggestion* (DC 18)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 20
SQ *ki* strike (lawful and magic), slow fall 50 ft.
Feats Ability Focus (mind blast), Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Improved Trip, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +17, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +7, Hide +26, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +15, Listen +26, Move Silently +26, Sense Motive +15, Spot +26, Tumble +15
Possessions combat gear, *bracers of armor +5*, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *monk's belt*

Teverak Silversmith: hp 134, see page 64.

Tactics: As soon as Teverak or Xamanthar detect the PCs, they immediately drink as many potions as possible, starting with *fly* and running through all of their combat enhancers. Xamanthar uses his *mind blast* on warriors as well as anybody else within the area of effect. Making liberal use of his extract ability to slay stunned creatures, he also attacks spellcasters with stunning fists. He prefers hit-and-run tactics, but does not shy away from closing with a PC if he looks wounded or weakened. If it looks as if the party is getting the best of him, he retreats to area **M18**.

Teverak is the first to flee combat if things look bad, for unknown to Carradoc, he has shrugged off the effects of Xamanthar's *charms* weeks ago, staying around to assist in a somewhat worthy cause (and perhaps to pilfer some loot from within the mythical vault).

M18. The Vault of Khun-mar-dornar (EL 19)

The ledge beyond the rope bridge glows with a faint golden light that comes from a massive pair of metal doors. Constructed of adamantine, the doors are nevertheless carved with a fantastically detailed rendering of an enormous tree, its branches spreading across the entire width of the ledge.

If the PCs have traveled here straight from the tomb of Bajak Thunderfist, they catch Carradoc before he has fully prepared himself to enter the chamber of Khun-mar-dornar. Here he makes his last stand as he prepares to give all for his beliefs. PCs that have rested or taken their time making their way through the mountain find the great doors open and Carradoc within the chamber beyond.

Carradoc's intention is to flood the chamber with summoned creatures as well as his trained rust monsters. The rust monsters are used last, allowing them to devour Khun-mar-dornar. Should Carradoc be allowed to assault the vault without intervention he overpowers its guardian (with some difficulty).

Carradoc **CR 18**
Male elf druid 18
NE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +18, Spot +18
Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

AC 35, touch 18, flat-footed 30
hp 120 (18 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine
Immune poison, sleep
Resist fire 30

Fort +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +20 (+4 vs. fey)

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *scimitar* +13 (1d6/18–20)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +12
Special Actions elemental shape 2/day, wild shape 6/day (Huge, Tiny, plant)
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of displacement*, *potion of haste*
Spells Prepared (CL 18, +12 melee touch, +16 ranged touch)
9th—*foresight**, *storm of vengeance* (DC 25)
8th—*mass cure serious wounds*, *finger of death* (DC 24), empowered *fire seeds* (DC 23)
7th—empowered *call lightning storm* (DC 21), *heal*, *fire storm* (DC 23)
6th—*mass cure light wounds*, *greater dispel magic* (2), empowered *flame strike* (DC 20), *wall of stone* (DC 22)
5th—*animal growth*, *baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *death ward*, *stoneskin**, *wall of thorns*
4th—*air walk**, *cure serious wounds* (2), *flame strike* (DC 20), *freedom of movement**, *ice storm*
3rd—*daylight*, *greater magic fang* (2)*, *protection from energy* (2), *stone shape*, *wind wall*
2nd—*barkskin* (2)*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *fog cloud*, *resist energy* (2)*
1st—*cure light wounds*, *faerie fire* (2), *longstrider* (2)*, *produce flame*
0—*detect magic* (2), *guidance* (2), *light*, *read magic*
*already cast

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 22, Cha 12
SQ a thousand faces, resist nature's lure, spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), timeless body, trackless step, wild empathy +21, woodland stride
Feats Augment Summoning, Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration)
Skills Concentration +21, Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +18, Spellcraft +5, Spot +18, Survival +15
Possessions +2 *wild white dragonhide breastplate*, +3 *heavy wooden shield*, +1 *scimitar*, *ring of protection +3*, *periapt of wisdom +4*, *cloak of resistance +3*, 500 gp worth of diamond dust

Elemental Shape (Su) When Carradoc takes the form of a Large earth elemental, his statistics change as follows:
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +16, Spot +16
AC 39, touch 11, flat-footed 37
hp 120 (18 HD); **DR** 5/— and 10/adamantine
Immune elemental traits
Fort +17, **Ref** +7, **Will** +18 (+4 vs. fey)
Spd 30 ft., earth glide
Melee 2 slams +20 (2d8+8)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +24
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Atk Options earth mastery, push
Spells Carradoc loses the ability to cast 9th-level spells, and also loses a bonus 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd-, 5th-, and 6th-level spell
Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Wis 18
Feats in addition to his normal feats, Carradoc gains Cleave, Great Cleave, and Power Attack

Carradoc and Silvedor

Scaling the Adventure

"Bright Mountain King" is designed for a party of four 16th-level PCs. Here are a few suggestions on how to modify the adventure for different levels of play:

13th–15th-level PCs: Leave all encounters of less than EL 15 as written. Carradoc should be reduced to 16th level, Teverak should lose a level in each of his classes, and Bajak Thunderfist should be changed to a 12th level-fighter. Rulinthrix should be changed to a young adult golden dragon. If the PCs struggle to get through Bajak's tomb, feel free to give them a chance to rest before they tackle the vault.

17th–18th-level PCs: Give all NPCs an extra level or Hit Die where appropriate to increase the challenge. Increase the trap DCs by 2 to make them harder to spot and disarm. Carradoc should be increased to 19th level, but leave Rulinthrix at his current power level to give the NPCs a greater chance of defeating the dragon unless the PCs come to his rescue.

Silvedor **CR** —
Female dire lion animal companion
N Large animal
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +10
AC 30, touch 13, flat-footed 26
hp 119 (14 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12 (+16 vs. enchantment); evasion
Spd 50 ft.
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d6+10) and bite +17 (1d8+5)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +23
Atk Options improved grab (bite), pounce
Special Actions rake +19 (1d6+5)
Abilities Str 28, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ link, share spells
Feats Alertness, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will, Run, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Hide +19, Listen +20, Move Silently +23, Spot +20, Swim +15

Possessions *collar of armor +2 (as bracers of armor +2)*

ADVANCED RUST MONSTER (4) **CR 7**

N Large aberration
Monster Manual 216
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +12, Spot +12
AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17
hp 127 (15 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6
Spd 40 ft.; Run
Melee antennae +14 touch (rust) and bite +9 (1d6+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +19
Atk Options Combat Reflexes
Abilities Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ rust
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Run, Track
Skills Listen +12, Spot +12

Tactics: Carradoc immediately sends in his rust monsters to assault the strongest warriors (or at least those with the most armor) and commands Silvedor to attack any obvious spellcasters. He then summons as many creatures as possible before unloading all of his offensive spells (*flame strike, storm of vengeance,* and *call lightning storm*). If forced into melee, he uses wild shape to transform into an earth elemental and attacks the victims of his rust monsters.

Development: Should the PCs arrive in time to prevent Carradoc from opening the vault doors with *Darsam-tor-ews* and accessing the chamber of Khun-mar-dornar, they are left alone at the door to the richest treasure in the land with the key.

Noble PCs walk away, returning the key to the temple of Moradin at nearby Khun-drukar. Many PCs may wish to open the vault doors and take a peek, or simply plunder whatever was important enough to protect for so many centuries.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: If the PCs prevent Carradoc from opening the doors, recapture *Darsam-tor-ews,* and return it to the priests in Khun-drukar without opening the vault themselves, give them experience as though they had defeated Rulinthrix (see area **M19** below) in combat.

M19. The Tree of Life (EL 16+)

This glittering cavern twinkles and sparkles in the light of the glowing doors. On the far side of the cavern, a weave of mineral veins coils around itself, creating the illusion of a tree trunk with "roots" of precious metal that spread into the ground. The tree reaches high into the air before spreading out into the cavern's ceiling, where the veins split to reveal precious gemstones lodged within. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and dozens of others create a dazzling display of wealth.

The lower level of Bright Mountain is located deep in the heart of the Tormars, and its heart lies on a junction with the planar fabric of the multiverse. Here the Elemental Plane of Earth exerts constant pressure on the Material Plane and, eventually, the tiniest of holes appeared. This led to the formation of the mountain range as well as the millennia-long growth of the precious Khun-mar-dornar, whose formation acted like a plug to slow the encroachment of the planar elements into the world.

Creatures: If the PCs have not already confronted Carradoc in area **M18**, he is here combating the protector of the cave. To make it worse for the PCs, the guardian of the tree sees any trespasser as an opponent that has broken into the vault of Moradin.

Ages ago, Moradin made a pact with a family of gold dragons to oversee the protection of this chamber. Each member of the family is bound to one hundred years of service here. At the end of each term of service, the small community of lantern archons that look over the chamber from a scrying pool within the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia drop the protective *dimensional lock* effect long enough to *gate* in the next guardian.

RULINTHRIX **CR 16**

Male adult gold dragon
Monster Manual 84
LG Huge dragon (fire)
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; keen senses; Spot +30, Listen +30
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Ignan, Infernal
Aura frightful presence (180-ft. radius, DC 28)
AC 34, touch 8, flat-footed 34
hp 264 (23 HD) **DR** 5/magic
Immune fire, paralysis, sleep
SR 23
Fort +18, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18
Weakness vulnerable to cold
Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.
Melee† bite +27 (2d8+16) and 2 claws +25 (2d6+10) and 2 wings +25 (1d8+10) and tail slap +25 (2d6+21)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +23 **Grp** +42
Attack Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch
Special Actions breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 12d10 fire, DC 26 Reflex save half; or 50-ft. cone, 6 Str damage, DC 26 Fort save negates), crush (2d8+16)
Spells Known (CL 11th)
3rd (6/day)—*haste, heroism*
2nd (8/day)—*blur, bull's strength, resist energy*
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 18), *detect undead, identify, mage armor*, obscuring mist*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th)
3/day—*bless*
1/day—*luck bonus*
† 5-point Power Attack
* already cast.
Abilities Str 33, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 24
SQ alternate form, water breathing
Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Practiced Spellcaster (+4 CL), Snatch
Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +20, Diplomacy +30, Disguise +28, Hide –1, Intimidate +24, Jump +46, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +15, Listen +30, Move Silently +7, Search +28, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +28, Spot +30, Swim +19, Survival +15

Possessions *crown of Charisma +4 (as cloak of Charisma +4), lesser rod of quicken metamagic*

Development: Even if the PCs enter this chamber with the best of intentions, Rulinthrix immediately attacks them (if he is not already defending against Carradoc's assault). He is extremely paranoid when it comes to defending Khun-mar-dornar.

Only if the PCs can convince the great dragon that they have no intention of taking any of the wealth in the chamber can they prevent the creature from attacking them (his initial attitude is unfriendly). Even then, he demands that they reseal the vault when they leave and never return.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs fail to prevent Carradoc from slaying Rulinthrix and destroying Khun-mar-dornar, the mineral trade in the Tormars dries up within a year as his minions devour all of the major veins in the range. Eventually, the city becomes little more than a ghost town for prospectors and a trade-stop for caravans.

If the PCs succeed in defeating Carradoc and saving Khun-mar-dornar, they are confronted with an interesting predicament. The wealth in the cavern is enough to purchase magic beyond most mortal's ken, but it comes at a great price. Khun-mar-dornar is sacred to Moradin himself, not to mention the family of gold dragons that are sworn to protect it. If the PCs desecrate it, they will make some powerful enemies indeed.

Honorable PCs can learn how to reseal the vault from the dragon, then leave the range forever and never mention the secret again. The vault can be resealed by calling down the power of Moradin and hitting the doors with *Darsam-tor-ews*, allowing the power of the deity to infuse the doors once more with the magic that once sealed them.

The PCs may think they have completed an important quest without anybody to prove it to, but they are wrong. Moradin himself watches the final battle in the cavern of Khun-mar-dornar, allowing the mortals within to determine the fate of the wonder. Should they all act honestly and accordingly within a holy place of Moradin, he is pleased with the respect given to him and rewards them secretly by giving each PC a permanent +2 inherent bonus to any one ability score, granted in a vision the next time the PC rests.

This is my second appearance in the pages of DUNGEON *magazine, fuelled by a long desire to prove to my mother and girlfriend that money can grow on trees. She still wont buy me that gold-plated mythical Norse duck warrior though...*

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TOTAL	**32,391**	**29,578**
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CRIME SCENES

BY FRANK BRUNNER
BY KYLE HUNTER

Whether he kicks down a parlor door just a moment too late, or the solemn knock of a watchman wakes him from meerschaum dreams at half-past twelve, nothing intrigues a sleuth more than a crime scene. Dead aristocrats, purloined jewels, and cryptic ransom notes are just a few examples of mysterious clues that can lead to high adventure.

This article presents two crime scenes, the evidence, and two possible solutions for each mystery. Whether you use one of these solutions or your own, take care to vary the sleuthing process. Some criminal investigations can result in roleplay-intensive interrogations, research stints, and stakeouts, but others should quickly lead to full-blooded frontal assaults.

THE AMBUSH WAGON

Children jump and shout in the bazaar when Deverak the Deaf's daisy-painted wagon trundles into town. Smiths, too, let their ringing hammers fall silent while they wait to see if Deverak has brought adamantine, green star metal, mithral, or something even more exotic this year. When the dwarf hops down, silently waves a greeting to the crowd, and lifts his wagon's flap, he is as startled as anyone else when a storm of 12 stirges explodes into the bazaar. If the characters wish to investigate, they must first slay or drive off the stirges before they drink their fill of innocent shoppers.

Diplomacy or Intimidate Checks

DC 15: Deverak admits (via Dwarven script scrawled in the dirt) to doing business with some half-orcs in the

forest on the way here, but all he bought from them was a maple crate filled with brightly painted pottery.

DC 25: Deverak confides that his shipment was especially valuable. In addition to the wooden toys and illusory gewgaws he always picks up for the children, he had twelve ingots of cold iron for the smiths that are now missing.

Search Checks

DC 15: Droppings from the stirges indicate that they were in the wagon for days. Deverak admits that, in his haste to reach town, he had not opened the wagon since leaving the forest.

DC 20: Several pottery shards are scattered throughout the wagon hold.

DC 25: A fine golden hair is caught in the sideboards of the wagon's hold. A DC 22 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that it belongs to a nymph.

DC 30: Enough pottery shards are recovered to piece them together into a small urn with a symbol on the side. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies it as the symbol of Orcus.

Survival Check

DC 22: If the party backtracks along Deverak's path, they can find the spot where he did business with the half-orcs. The party can follow the half-orcs' tracks to an ancient orc burial ground, where the tracks stop in mid-stride.

Solution 1

A holy war rages in the forest. On one side, nymphs, grigs, and blink dogs are arrayed against their new foe, a tribe of half-orcs that worship Orcus, demon prince of undead. The orcs are led by several vampire spawn, one of whom used *gaseous form* to infiltrate the deaf dwarf's wagon while he wasn't looking. At night the undead stole the precious cold iron to use in the war against the fey. The vampire spawn left the stirges as a cruel surprise for the dwarf. The vampire spawn prefer to travel through the forest as a cool green mist to avoid the vengeful nymph scouts. When the players arrive at the ancient orc burial ground, they may be ambushed by vampire spawn, recruited by the fey, or both.

Solution 2

The fey of the forest are a dark lot indeed, corrupted by an ancient orc burial ground harboring an aspect of Orcus (*Miniatures Handbook* 53). They have enslaved the local half-orc and orc populations and use the humanoids as a labor force to prepare for their assault on nearby villages. They could not stand to see Deverak's load of cold iron reach civilized hands, so they stole the shipment and left the stirges in its place as a warning to urban society. A cabal of six nymph priestesses of Orcus lead the fey, commanding an army of blink dog skeletons and pixie zombies. If the villagers learn of the plot, they beg the PCs to intervene. If the PCs can confront or exorcise the aspect of Orcus from the burial ground, the fey creatures are freed from their corruption and grateful for their rescue.

THE NOT-SO-FORGOTTEN THIEF

Jimrak Torrelon, Brocaded Sergeant of the Royal Halberdiers, was quite pleased with his men after they nabbed a thieves' guild sub-boss, Teressil "the Threat" Marbuck, and locked him up in a deep oubliette. When they opened the shaft's grate this morning to lower his pail of gruel, however, the Halberdiers found the Threat unresponsive. On closer inspection, they discovered he was dead, with vicious wounds spilling viscera onto the pit floor and his neck and mouth completely destroyed (preventing interrogation via *speak with dead*).

Search Checks

DC 15: Signs of vomiting and illness indicate that someone, presumably the Threat, was sick recently.

DC 20: The Threat's hands are not cut or wounded—it appears as if he did not defend himself with his hands or claw at his attacker.

DC 30: If you're using solution 1, a broken tooth lies near one of the pit's stone walls. A DC 23 Knowledge (the planes) check is sufficient to identify it as a slaad's tooth.

If you're using solution 2, a search instead reveals a strangely twitching patch of diseased-looking flesh lodged in a crack high on the wall near the grating that allows access to the oubliette. A DC 19 Knowledge (religion) check identifies this twitching flesh as a fragment of a terrible undead creature known as a skulking cyst (*Libris Mortis* 120).

Heal Checks

DC 15: The wounds are jagged and uneven, as if made with a natural weapon rather than a sharp blade.

DC 25: The wounds appear to have been made from the inside out.

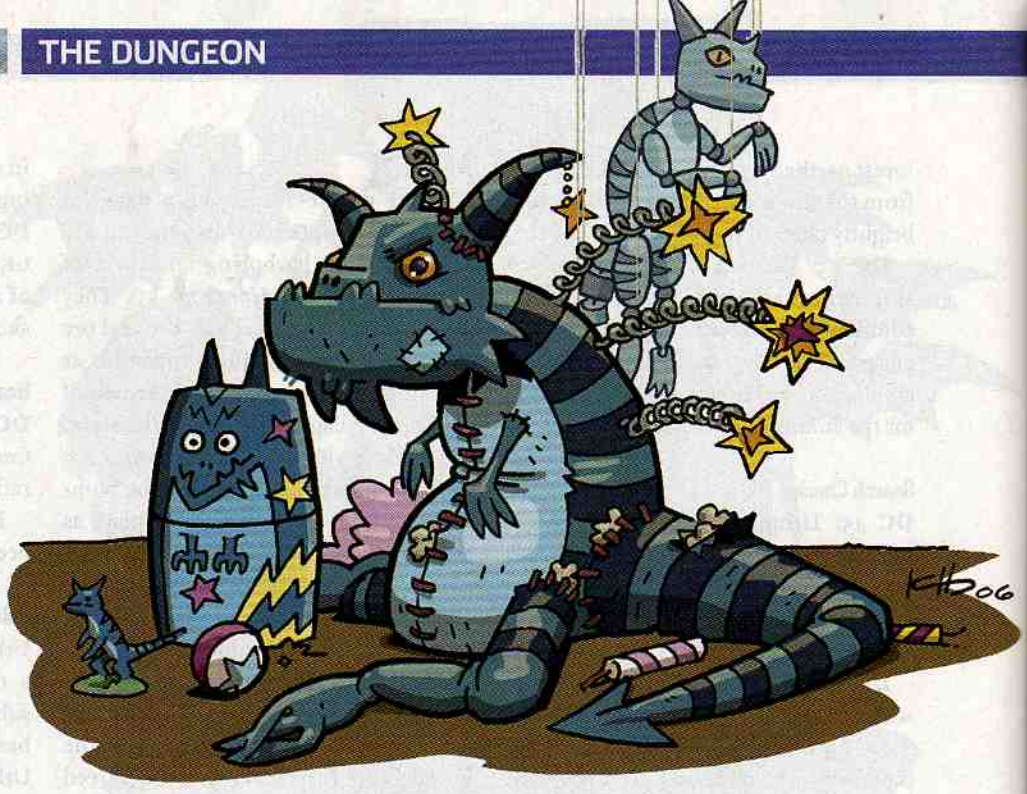
Solution 1

Urlen Dare, the thieves' guild boss, employs a red slaad to implant all of his key subordinates with slaad eggs on a regular basis. Under normal circumstances, Urlen then has a priest of Olidammara surreptitiously cast *remove disease* on his sub-bosses a few days before the egg can hatch. If a sub-boss is captured, the egg develops normally, first sickening and then killing its host as the newly hatched blue slaad claws its way out from the inside. The Royal Halberdiers may ask the PCs to track down the blue slaad, who escaped from the oubliette using multiple *passwall* spells into the sewers under the citadel.

Solution 2

Unknown to the city watch, the thieves' guild is locked in a shadow war with a cult of Vecna worshipers for control of the city underworld. Teressil Marbuck had just escaped a particularly harrowing battle with Vecnan necromancers (during which he became infected with a necrotic cyst) when he was captured by the Royal Halberdiers. He was murdered by a member of the Halberdiers who is secretly a necromancer cultist himself. This cultist used his foul necromantic magic to transform Teressil's necrotic cyst into an undead skulking cyst, which climbed up the shaft and sithered through the bars above to escape. Characters who pursue this investigation soon discover that a necromancer hides among the Royal Halberdiers, a necromancer who certainly ties to kill them to protect his sinister secret.

For further details on necrotic cysts and skulking cysts, see *Libris Mortis*.



100 EVEN LESS USEFUL ITEMS

BY RICHARD PETT
BY KYLE HUNTER

Not every item in the dragon's hoard is a gem-encrusted crown or a magical sword. Over the years, even the most discriminating monster or merchant acquires a large collection of strange and unusual items that are neither useful nor valuable, but instead have emotional significance. Whether they're front and center in the wizard's trophy room or swept into a corner of a goblin's den, the following hundred items can add a dash of the unexpected to an otherwise generic treasure trove, keeping players guessing and providing potential adventure hooks. Remember that there may be reasons why many of these seemingly worthless items haven't been discarded—reasons that could return to haunt their new owners.

1. Bagpipe made from a dead roper
2. Knitted nightmare with red wool flames
3. Bucket of horseshoes that have been cut in half
4. Giant's coat hanger made of dire boar tusks
5. Large model of a hill giant's stockade constructed from spent torches
6. Pair of shields decorated with chicken motifs
7. Unusable ten-bladed scimitar labeled "Deathreaper" on each blade in mystic runes
8. Painting of an yrthak ridden by gnomes
9. Eleven left boots
10. Outrageously colorful outfit of hat, cloak, and breeches sewn with peacock feathers and labeled "Property of Ceswick the Dowdy"
11. Sixty-eight wooden spoons painted green and numbered 12 through 80

12. Impossibly wide-brimmed hat fitted for a small humanoid head and covered in pictures of steaming pies
13. Quartet of cartoons depicting gnomes with their noses held aloft on stilts
14. Huge left boot made to resemble a house
15. Life-sized topiary badger
16. Two stuffed bugbears that, by the look of them, might have been used as toys by a giant child
17. Skull set with cheap fake gemstones, labeled "swearskull" in Orc
18. Pair of 12-foot-high knitting needles
19. Set of shocker lizard toys
20. Large pot of purple ink
21. Stone helm fashioned like a hydra with the Goblin inscription, "To Chief Thumper XXXII, on the occasion of his fifth birthday—Roar! Roar! Roar!"
22. Bucket of gorgon scales
23. Collection of lewd kobold statuettes
24. Daisy chain made of dead centipedes
25. Clay helm
26. Bag of bent and rusted iron spikes
27. Huge bucket filled with dried and flattened frogs
28. Double-ended trumpet
29. Ninety-eight clay naga miniatures
30. Twelve broken broomsticks stuffed in a tall, pointy black hat
31. Lute decorated with leopard fur and missing its strings
32. Large dead constrictor snake with a gnome-shaped bulge in the middle (actually a dressmaker's dummy)
33. Huge copper plug for a colossal sink
34. Fur hat large enough for two small creatures to camp under
35. Milk churn full of stuffed voles
36. Trio of candlesticks made from mummified rats
37. Length of bunting with the words "Welcome home, Hubert" on it
38. Ornate, bat-themed mirror that only reflects vampires
39. Selection of miniature toy alchemist's tools and nonmagical potions
40. Kite made to resemble a gnome riding a badger
41. Wicker fireguard
42. Beaten-copper tojanida-shaped lamp stand and matching wash-basin
43. Quartet of silhouette puppets made to look like otyughs
44. Four jars labeled "kobold repellent" and filled with soap
45. Legless tabletop painted in yellow and blue stripes
46. Huge book filled with pressed and dried assassin vines
47. Pile of mummy wrappings
48. Fake wooden pie of considerable size that smells like ale
49. Locathah sock puppet
50. Two-foot-long wooden baton carved at one end to resemble a tongue
51. Chess set carved to resemble gelatinous cubes and black puddings
52. Trio of embroidered pictures of a blue manticore in flight
53. Giant eagle feather
54. Dead mephit squished flat and inflated like a balloon
55. Sack full of two-inch lengths of string
56. Poem written on parchment which claims to reveal "the location of the *Machine of Lum the Mad*"
57. Tin torch sconce in the shape of an illithid head
58. Twenty-foot-long hunting horn
59. Large wooden skunk
60. Twelve black sheepskins
61. Iron goblet carved to resemble a crow
62. Staff with the seemingly meaningless words "Mnnmff Phatarn" carved on its sides over and over
63. Shepherd's crook with the words "Beware Zed, Prince of Rams" carved on its crook
64. Battle helm for a dire bear
65. Pair of giant's socks with many sewn holes and a family of cats living inside them
66. Jar of perfume labeled "Elixir of the Planes"—a purely fanciful name
67. Red scarf with tassels made to look like roper tentacles
68. Mangle with a battleaxe stuck halfway through it
69. Twenty gravestones with spelling errors riddling the epitaphs
70. Fake skybleeder larva made from an inflated pigskin embroidered with strips of seaweed
71. Book of obscure heraldic symbols that incorperate unlikely devices, such as Girallon Rampant, Polar Bear Passant, Gelatinous Cube Courant...
72. Pit fiend scarecrow
73. Collection of bent forks in a scroll case labeled, "Don't forget to eat!"
74. Large collection of ferret masks, ferret costumes, and ferret puppets in a ferret-shaped trunk
75. Set of manacles for a spellweaver or similar six-armed creature
76. Bag of dried acorns
77. Tome titled, "The Tale of Zord, Mightiest of the Yak Folk"
78. Weathered chapbook of what appears to be modron poetry
79. Huge, elaborate xorn puppet held aloft on great poles
80. Tankard filled with lard
81. Set of maps of duck ponds of various sizes in dangerous regions
82. Dwarf hat stand
83. Small set of modular steps for a halfling, complete with wheels
84. Eighty pebbles arranged by size and kept in separate bags
85. Welcome mat with "leave or die" written in Goblin
86. Book telling the story of Prince Rosewater, Lord of the mighty order of Celestial Kobold Paladins
87. Pillow stuffed with hippogriff feathers
88. Pile of stone cubes, each emblazoned with a different letter
89. Trio of broken dungeon doors
90. Milking stool labeled, "Property of Tom Huddle"
91. Belaying cleat, broken section of a pier, and severed rope, all still tied together
92. Large pile of ornate and colorful tiles bearing designs of writhing green worms
93. What appears to be a giant mouse wheel made of cart wheels, timbers, and rope
94. Chest full of broken swords
95. Selection of nasty-looking clown costumes sized for gnomes
96. Quartet of mind flayer masks
97. Stained-glass window depicting huge, bat-mounted goblins chasing gnomes riding enormous hedgehogs
98. Large glass jar containing a live slithering tracker (*Dungeon* #143)
99. Moveable coat hanger for a person with three heads
100. Pantomime hellhound costume.

HOLY SITES

BY HAL MACLEAN
BY KYLE HUNTER

They testify to the glory of bygone eras, hinting at wisdom lost in the ebb and flow of history's tides. Long after the cultures of their birth retreat into the shadow of myth, these great works remain, leaving later generations in awe of their mystery.

Such is the allure of the holy site. Those with a scholarly bent, or simply a touch of wanderlust, consider pilgrimages to marvel at these wonders firsthand an essential part of their education. While pilgrims frequently stumble upon adventures during their travels, it's also said that these mystical locations (or perhaps the journeys themselves) reveal untapped potential within the travelers. Below are a few examples of such holy sites, as well as benefits that a pilgrimage to such a place might bestow.

THE DANCING TEMPLE

Nestled deep within an isolated mountain range, this miles-wide plateau, its stone surface as smooth and level as a great frozen lake, supports an ornate temple ceaselessly spinning and gliding like a ship tacking in the wind. Moving at a pace just a touch slower than that of a running man, the temple follows its own erratic course, though always shying away from the edge of the plateau itself. Fashioned from obsidian and jade, the temple conveys the image of a rearing bird of prey, its looming belfry casting a razor-edged shadow as it whirls along its path. No doors or windows mar its surface, though every night different sections of it glow with an eerie luminescence. Pilgrims who attempt to mimic this temple in its dance from sunup to sundown, always careful to keep a respectful distance,

eventually discover a deep, primal rhythm underlying its every movement, granting them a +4 competence bonus on Tumble checks thereafter.

DRAGONSFIELD

Bent and twisted columns of fluted glass the size of ancient trees surround this seemingly normal pasture, where deep furrows of earth the width of a man crisscross the grass. Locals hold that a great dragon slayer from an earlier age seeded the field with thousands of teeth pried from the jaws of his reptilian foes. Sometimes, when the moon is full and the stars align, warriors born from these teeth pull themselves from the ground to strive against each other until the first ray of dawn causes them to collapse back into the crevices that spawned them. Shouting war cries in ancient tongues, their gear fashioned from copper and bronze, these refugees from a forgotten era savage anyone that steps on the field, but some magic within the surrounding columns keeps them from leaving. Any pilgrim who spends an entire night in close proximity to these warriors, fighting or darting regularly back through the columns to avoid blows, gains an improved instinct for avoiding weapons. This grants the pilgrim a +2 insight bonus to AC whenever he is unarmed.

FEATHER GAP

Reached by climbing more than five thousand handholds carved deep into the stone, this mile-high cliff offers a view so picturesque it seems more like a map than reality. Those who make this arduous climb without resorting to any magical means of transportation and jump off its edge gain the benefits of a *feather fall* spell until their feet touch the ground again. A small community of former pilgrims, addicted to the sensation of wafting across the heavens, dwells at the base of the cliff. Once each week, these "gliders," as they call themselves, take part in a special ceremony that they call "spitting in the devil's eye." Timing their leaps at precise moments and aiming for one of several geysers located just over a mile away, they use the updraft caused by the spouting water to rise thousands of feet in mere seconds. Any pilgrim who accompanies the gliders on this exhilerating stunt gains a new appreciation for the body's innate ability to push itself upwards. This grants the pilgrim a +4 competence bonus on Jump checks.

GLITTER FALLS

Gushing from a shallow cleft in an overhanging stone, this sparkling cascade of silvery light takes the form of a ceaseless flow of tiny, insubstantial bubbles pouring into a frothing pond. Though at first glance it seems merely an odd sort of waterfall, closer examination reveals it to be some sort of energy instead, a strange and welcoming radiation that leaves immersed limbs warm and tingling. A thick ring of verdant plant life surrounds the pool.

Any pilgrim who climbs into this pool and basks in its invigorating light for an entire day discovers it is easier to call upon the power of healing magic. The pilgrim gains a +2 bonus to his caster level whenever he casts any spell with the healing descriptor.

THE SENTINEL WAVE

This immense wave, nearly a thousand feet high, looms forever stationary over a mostly-abandoned port city, casting an omnipresent shadow and filling much of the harbor with an immobile wall of water that ripples in the breeze. Gulls wheel along its length, letting out shrill calls as they plunge into the wave to snatch up fish, somehow managing to bob on its surface even on those parts that overhang the ground itself. The few locals who remain explain that the wave has its own sense of up and down. Anyone in contact with the wave feels a tug toward its depths, allowing them to swim on its entire surface as if merely another stretch of ocean. According to legend, ships have actually sailed up one side of the wave and down the other, but few captains are willing to take the risk. Any pilgrim who swims up the wave to float in the water while the empty city sprawls out below gains a new understanding of how to master vertigo. This grants the pilgrim a +4 competence bonus on Balance checks.

PILGRIM [GENERAL]

You gain benefits after going on a pilgrimage. When on a pilgrimage, your mind is focused and you become more charismatic and eloquent.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (geography) 5 ranks, ability to speak at least three languages.

Benefit: As long as you're undertaking a pilgramage, you gain a +1 morale bonus on Will saves and all Charisma-based skill checks. If you don't achieve the goal of your pilgramage in one month, this +1 morale bonus becomes a –1 penalty until you reach your destination.

Once you reach your destination and undertake a specific ritual there, you gain a benefit both from the sense of accomplisment and the mystical powers of the region you've visited. This benefit typically manifests as a +4 competence bonus to a related skill, but sometimes has other effects. Once you recieve this bonus, you lose the morale bonus on Will saves and Charisma checks until you decide to undertake a new pilgrimage, at which point you regain those bonuses and lose any bonuses gained from a previous pilgramage.

VERMINHAUNT GORGE

Not all holy sites are benign and idyllic. The sinister ravine known as Verminhaunt Gorge is as much a blight on the land as it is a source of mystical power. Located deep in a mountain range nestled in a vast tropical jungle, the buzzing depths of Verminhaunt Gorge are home to hundreds of thousands of poisonous vermin, swarm and monstrous alike. Said to have been created ages ago when an immensely powerful vermiurge (*Epic Level Handbook* 226) was slain in a battle with a cabal of epic-level warlocks, Verminhaunt Gorge has become a place of wonder for those who find perfection in the mindless efficiency evident in the spider's web, the ant's colony, or the scorpion's brutality. A pilgrim that spends a day in Verminhaunt Gorge without killing a single creature, large or small, gains a +2 luck bonus on all saving throws against poison.

VERDIGRIS WYRM

BY GREG A. VAUGHAN
BY WARREN MAHY

The coils of this immense winged serpent stretch twenty feet long and are composed of articulated bronze rings. Its head resembles that of a dragon, with eerie glowing eyes and a maw full of razor-sharp metal fangs. The wings and single pair of legs positioned far back on the creature's body give it a sleek, aerodynamic look, and the entire construction is covered with a greenish patina of corrosion.

The verdigris wyrm is a guardian construct first created by the Shensite sect in the form of their sacred obah, Shensi the Serpent Spirit. They are principally encountered in the monks' secluded cliff-side sanctuaries in the land of Mur, but can also be found in any stronghold of the Shensite sect abroad. For more information on Mur and the Shensites, see *Dungeon* #136.

A verdigris wyrm weighs 1,000 pounds, but despite its weight is designed to climb amidst the crags and dense foliage of the Mur cliffs, its sharp-edged scales helping it to dig in and find purchase on surprisingly sheer walls. While capable of moving quietly through brush and dirt, on stone the jagged, ring-shaped segments of its body scrape against the rock and each other with the sound of fingernails on slate, often leaving signature greenish scrape marks.

Though the wyrm possesses both legs and wings, the latter are far too small to lift half a ton of bronze into the air. The creature's legs, while short and muscular, are located far back from the creature's natural balance point, forcing it to slither the front of its body on the floor like a snake while

the forward motion of its legs pushes the rear section into a high humpback. The result is a lumbering charge as strange as it is terrifying. On the rare occasions that someone questions a Shensite on the design, the monks gracefully point out that the shape works well enough for Shensi, ending any debate.

The corroded layer that gives the verdigris wyrm its name carries a debilitating disease known as greenblight. This terrible sickness is passed through contact with open wounds, such as those caused by constricting prey with its serrated scales. A victim of greenblight develops foul green rashes and open sores that reek of compost. Greenblight inflicts Strength damage, but does not kill its vicitm, instead reducing those who succumb to quivering mounds of contagious, plantlike matter.

A verdigris wyrm cannot speak, but can understand simple instructions in Muranni (or the language of its creator).

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

When on guard or stalking prey, a verdigris wyrm attempts to pass itself off as a statue until its quarry has lost interest and turned its attention elsewhere. At that point it either lunges out to bite or uses its hypnotizing gaze to immobilize a victim and make it easier to constrict. When it makes a full attack, a verdigris wyrm lashes out at prey with its bite, both of its razor-edged wings, and its spiked tail.

CONSTRUCTION

A verdigris wyrm's body is constructed from 1,000 pounds of bronze. The creator must be at least 16th level and able to cast arcane spells. Completing the ritual drains 4,000 XP from the creator and requires the spells *contagion, geas/quest, limited wish, polymorph any object,* and *hypnotism.*

The wyrm costs 200,000 gp to create, including 1,500 gp for the body. Casting and constructing the wyrm's length requires a DC 25 Craft (armorsmithing) or Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

TREASURE

Though the verdigris wyrm has little desire for treasure on its own, its most common use is as a guardian, generally of temples and holy sites sacred to the Shensite monks but occasionally of armories and treasuries as well. Considering the value of the wyrm itself, only the most important items or information warrant its continued vigilance.

VERDIGRIS WYRM **CR 10**

N Huge construct

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Aura hypnotic gaze (DC 16)

Languages Muranni

AC 26, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (–2 size, +9 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 128 (16 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine

Immune construct traits

Resist electricity 10; **SR** 19

Fort +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

Spd 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +18 (2d6+12 plus disease) and 2 wings +13 (1d8+4 plus disease) and tail +13 (2d6+4 plus disease)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28

Atk Options constrict (2d8+2d6+12 plus disease), improved grab

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Abilities Str 27, Dex 28, Con —, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 7

Skills Climb +24

Advancement 17–26 HD (Huge); 27–40 HD (Gargantuan); 41–48 HD (Colossal)

Constrict (Ex) With a successful grapple check, a verdigris wyrm can constrict a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage. The serrated edges on the inside of the articulated rings deal an additional 2d6 points of slashing damage and expose the victim to greenblight.

Disease (Ex) Greenblight—contact, Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d8 Str. A victim reduced to Strength 0 by greenblight does not die. He remains horribly aware of his situation, but cannot move or take any actions and quickly takes root in any available soil. This mound of writhing, wet plantlike stuff can survive for months if exposed regularly to sunlight and a moist environment. The save is Constitution–based.

VERDIGRIS WYRM LORE

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC	Result
20	This creature is a magical construct. Its metallic body resists damage from non-adamantine weapons or attacks.
25	The verdigris wyrm can hypnotize victims with its gaze, forcing them to stand motionless or even walk willingly into the embrace of its serrated coils.
30	The greenish corrosion on the exterior of the verdigris wyrm is diseased, and victims constricted in its coils run the risk of being infected with a debilitating illness as the corroded metal flakes off into wounds caused by the sharp ring segments.
35	The verdigris wyrm was originally designed as a temple guardian by the Shensite monks of a mysterious land called Mur, and is fashioned in the image of their guardian spirit, Shensi the Serpent.

Hypnotizing Gaze (Su) Hypnotism, 30 feet, Will DC 16 negates. A hypnotized creature can take no actions, remaining motionless and staring blankly at the verdigris wyrm as long as the construct remains within 30 feet. Any attack upon a hypnotized creature immediately grants the victim a new saving throw to recover from the effects, although if the verdigris wyrm remains within 30 feet, the character may have to save again on his next action if he doesn't avert his gaze. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a verdigris wyrm must hit with its bite or tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and constricts its foe.

Skills Verdigris wyrms have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A verdigris wyrm can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Downer XIX

Fool's Errand

Underdark mercenary Downer Tarantula has discovered that he is a pawn in a contest to crown a God of Gaming. As the agent of a powerful copper dragon, he must carry a living artifact to the extra-planar nexus, the city of Sigil. Former criminal allies of Downer want in on the action, and have turned against him. The Needleman, dark stalker and master tailor, has tracked him to a safehouse. Unknown to the Needleman, a cadre of neogi have temporarily taken control of the city's thieves' guild.

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** Downer is ©2005 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. www.superunicorn.com

YOU ALREADY OWE ME-- AARGH!
HEH, YA GOT ME. BUT YOU'RE NOT THE GUILD'S ONLY UNWELCOME VISITORS.
HEY RUBE!
WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?
MIKEY, GET IN HERE!
COMIN' BOSS!
HOLY !#@X!
THERE'S SOME TROUBLE. GET BACK TO YOUR ROOM.
CLOSED
JUST CATCHING A LATE SHOW, PAL.
SUCKER. I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW THEY RUN THINGS UP HERE.
RIGHT-O.
THE INFINITE STAIRCASE --
SIMPLE ENOUGH.
NOW TO FIND SIGIL.

WOODLAND SHRINE
Map of Mystery
Forest Stream
Cliff
Cavern Entrance
Water Cavern
Sinkhole
Waterfalls
Rocky Trail
Shrine
River
Steep Slope
Road
Ford
Campsite
Ridge
To Ancient Fortress
1 square = 5 feet
Woods
WEST

DUNGEON #142

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

THE SAVAGE TIDE REACHES THE ISLE OF DREAD!
DUNGEON
RETURN TO THE LOST CITY
RAID THE VAULT OF THE MOUNTAIN KING
CULTISTS OF ZARGON • UNDEAD DWARVES • TERROR BIRDS
THE ISLE OF DREAD • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

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Michael M. Kaluta

MASQUE OF DREAMS

by B. Matthew Conklin III

A masquerade ball at a remote desert oasis turns tragic when the party is crashed by goblin minions of a priestess of Zargon. Can the PCs rescue the abducted guests before they become the latest victims of the Lost City of the valley of Death? A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

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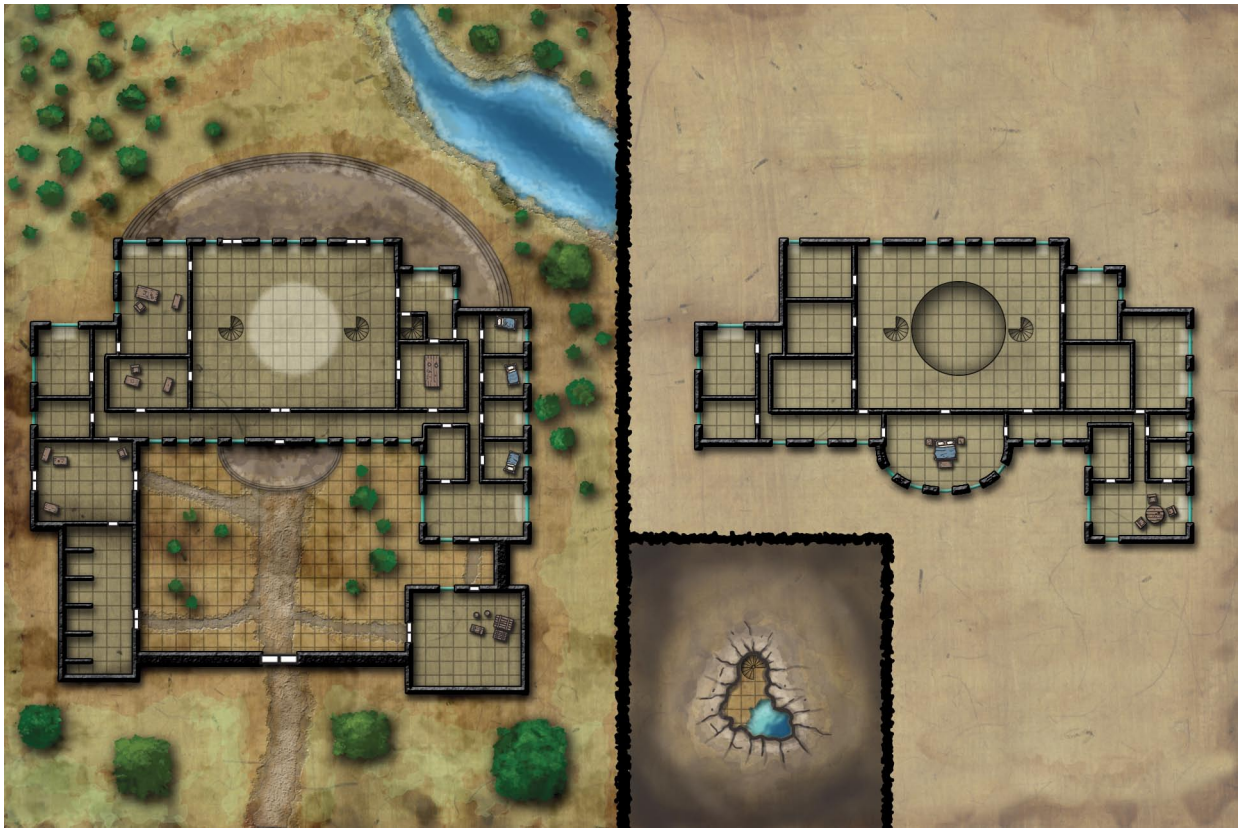

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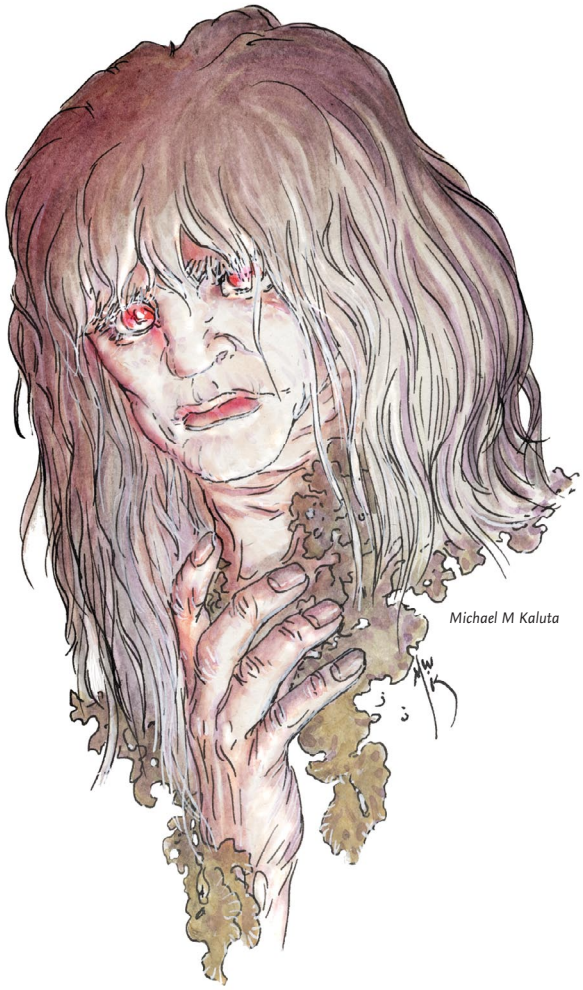

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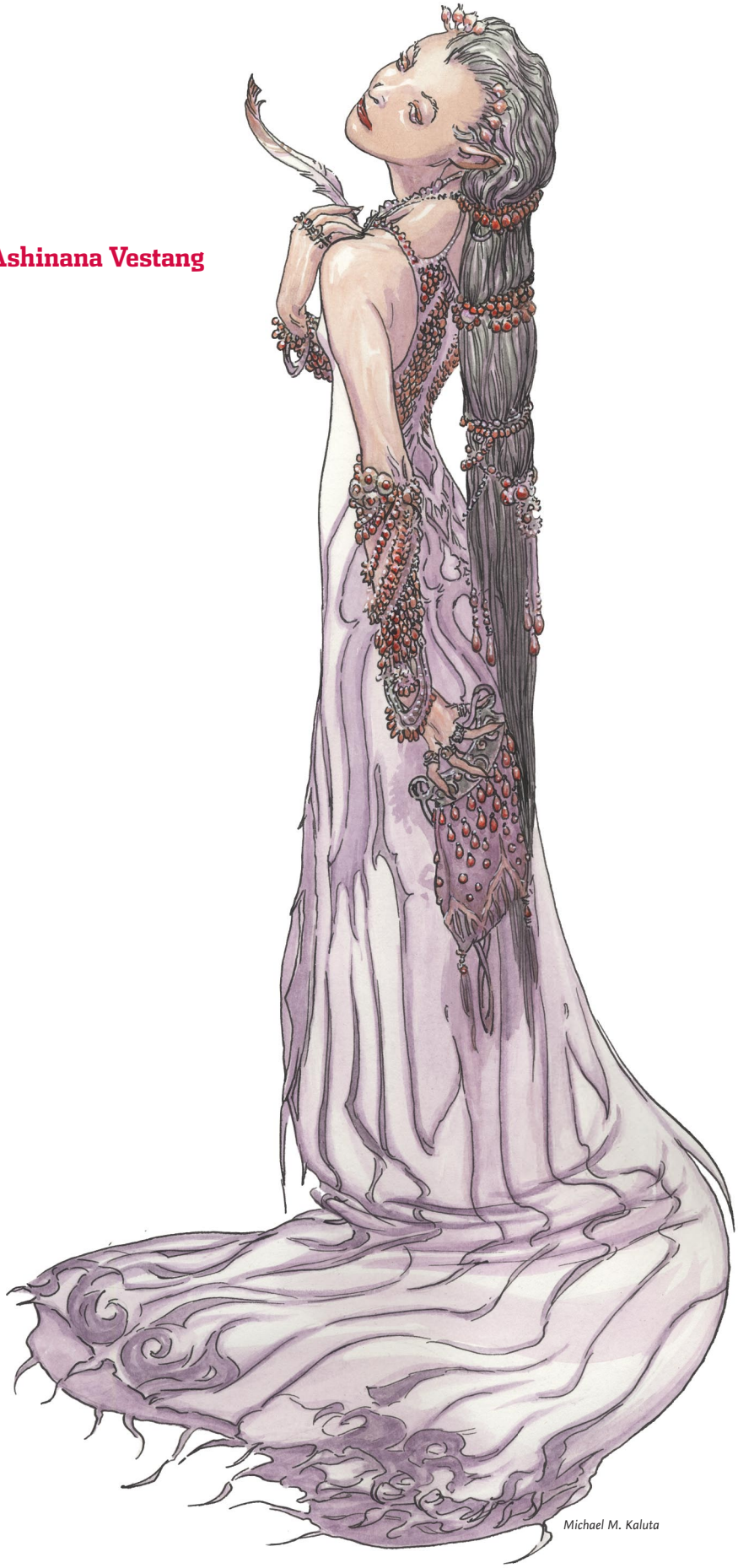
Lady Ashinana Vestang



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James Ryman

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Ben Wootten

HERE THERE BE MONSTERS

by Jason Bulmahn

Shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread! Faced with a dangerous journey, the PCs must first escort a ragged band of castaways through monster-infested wildlands in order to reach the safety promised by the colony of Farshore on the isle's southern tip. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 7th-level characters.

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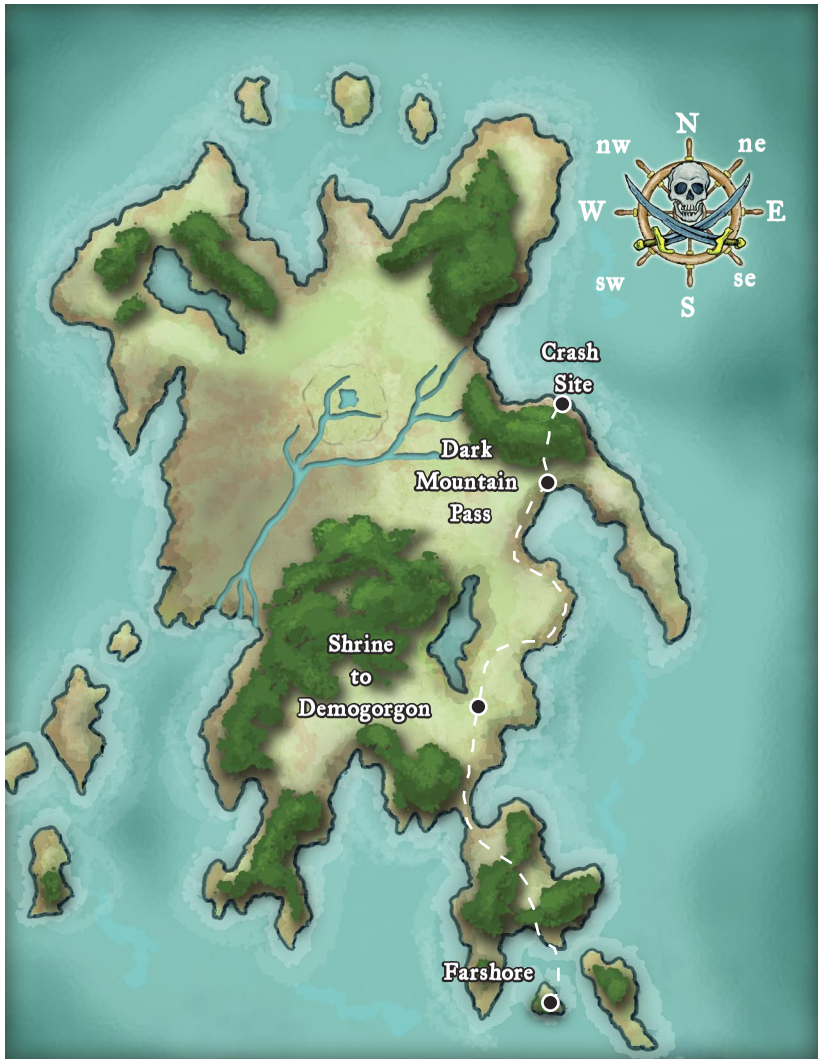

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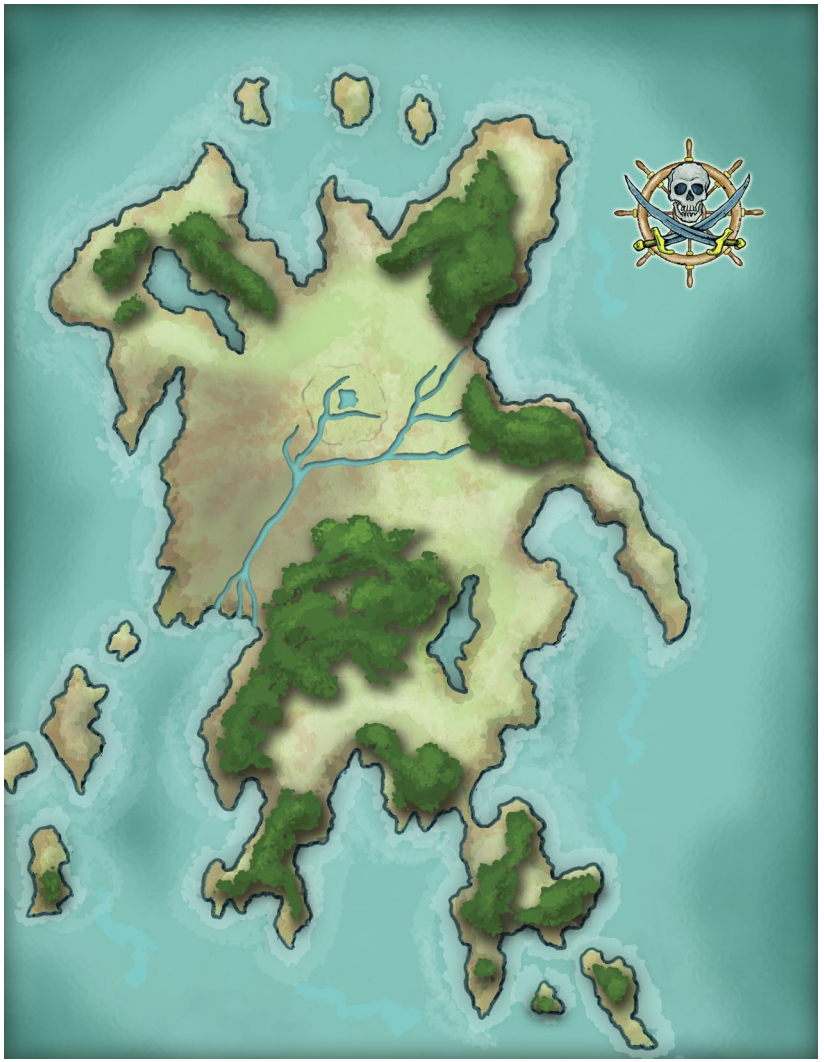

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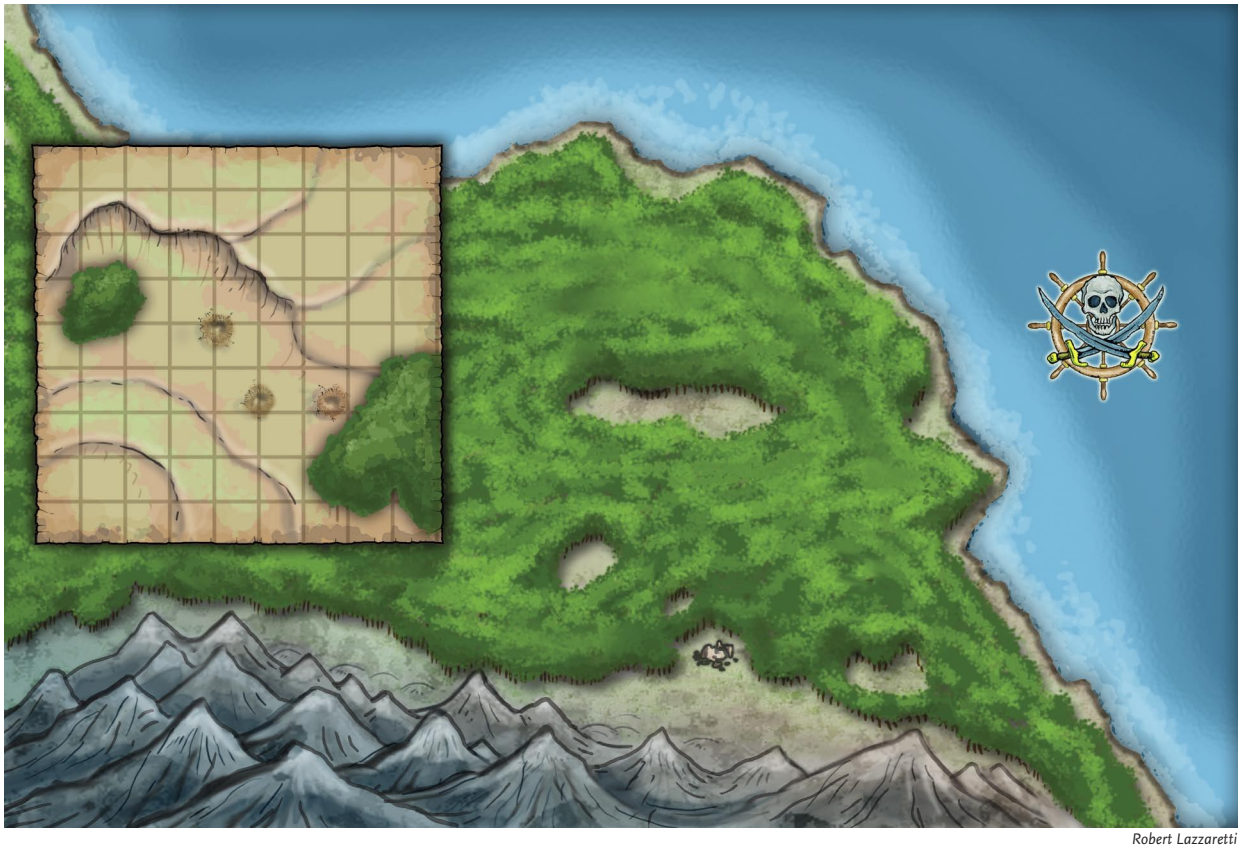

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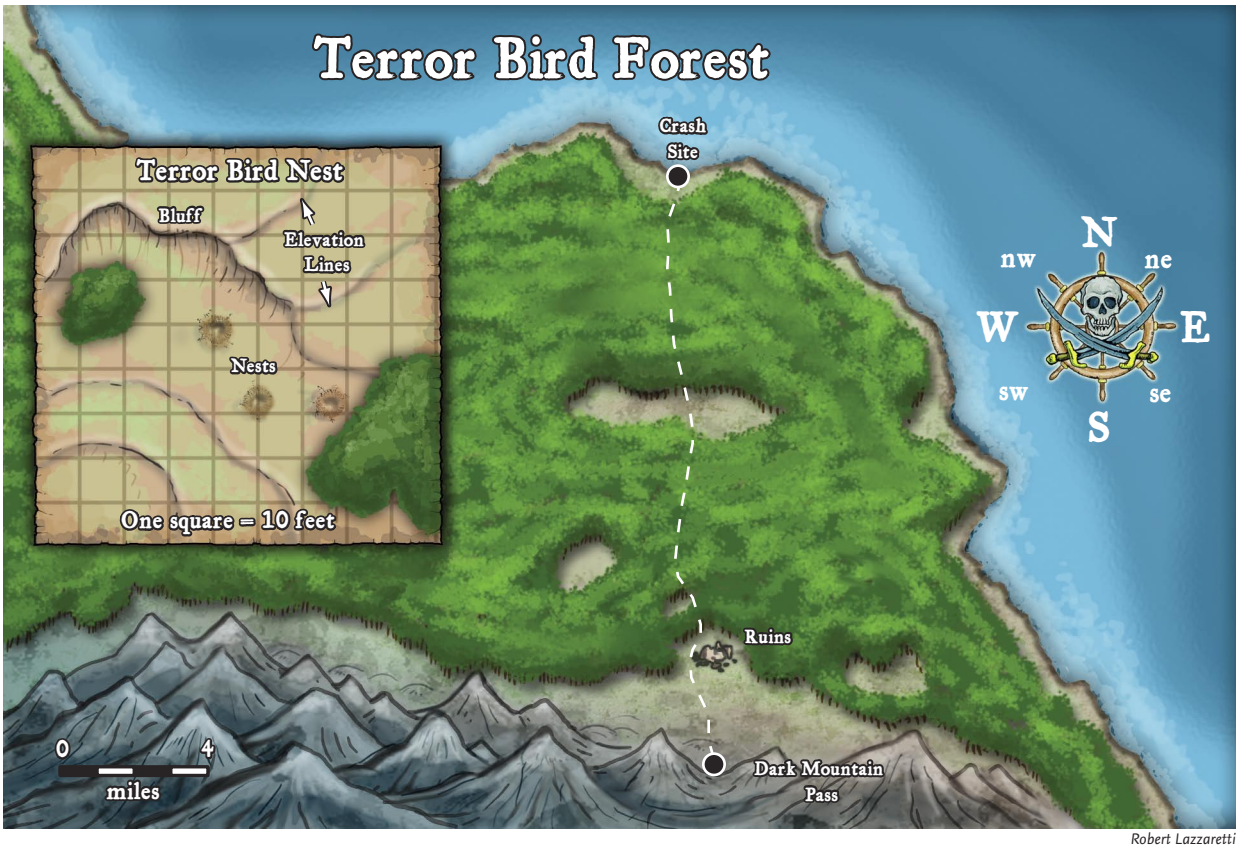

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Lithira

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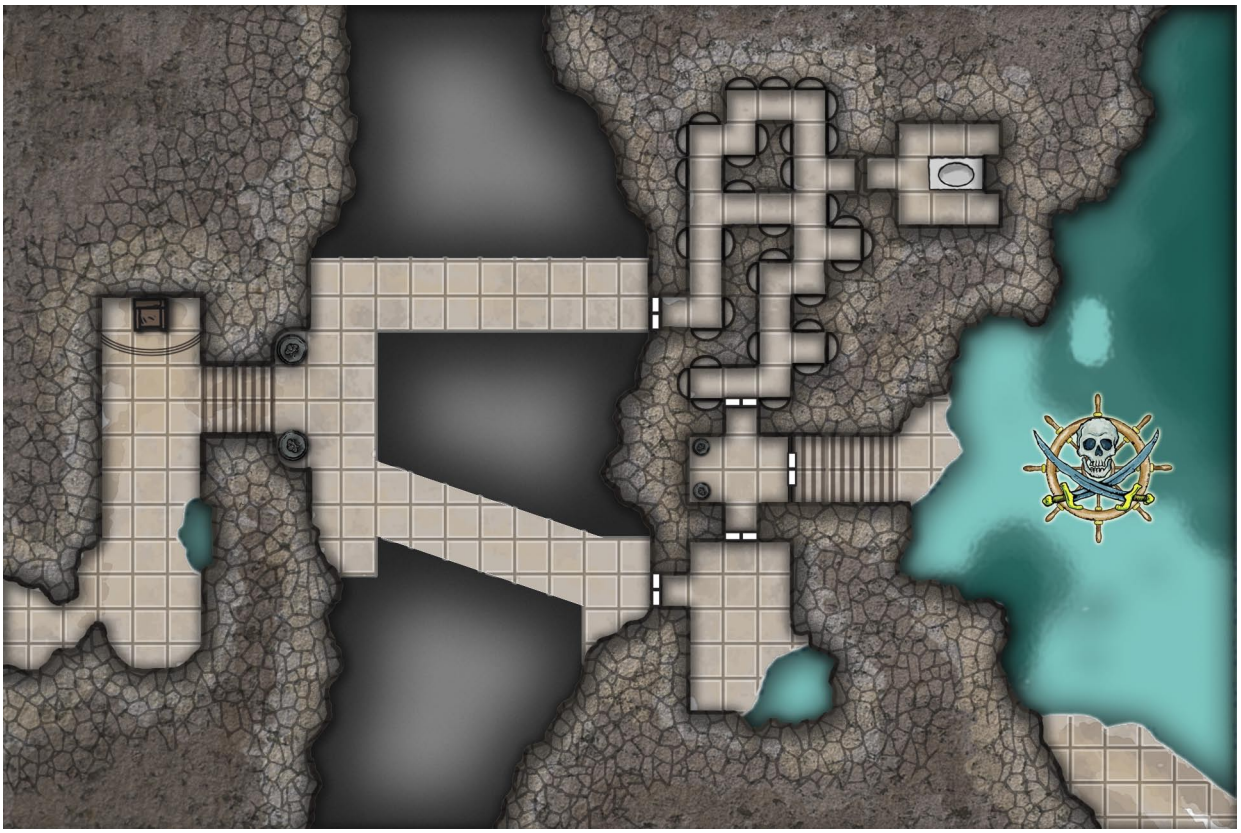

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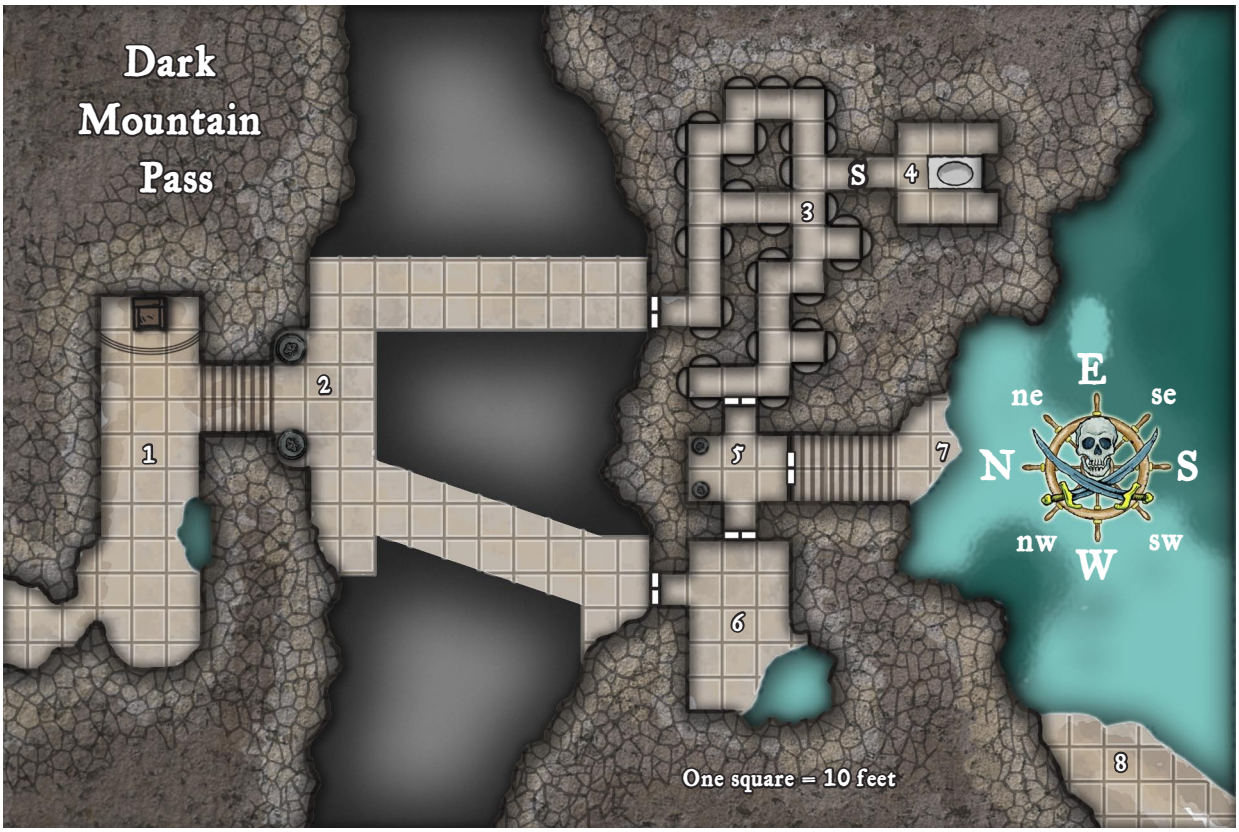

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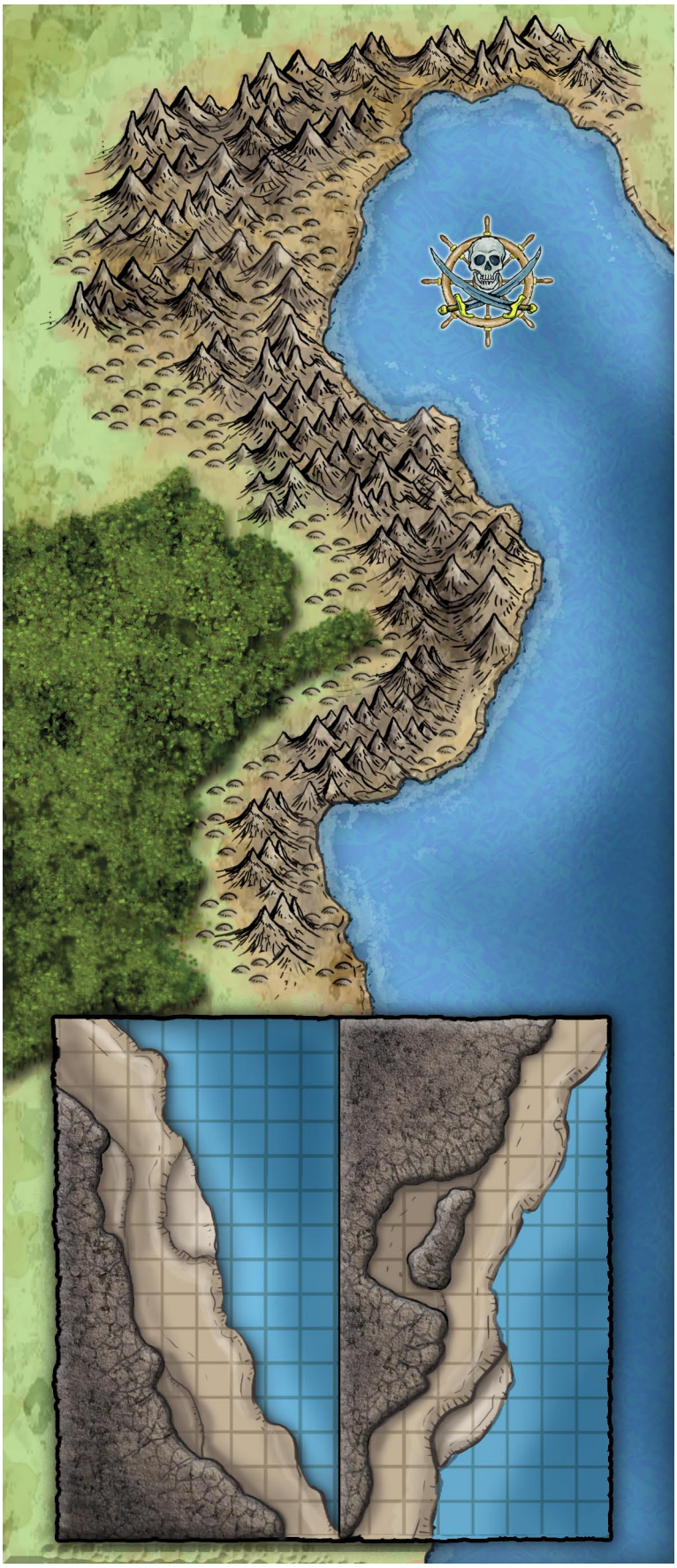

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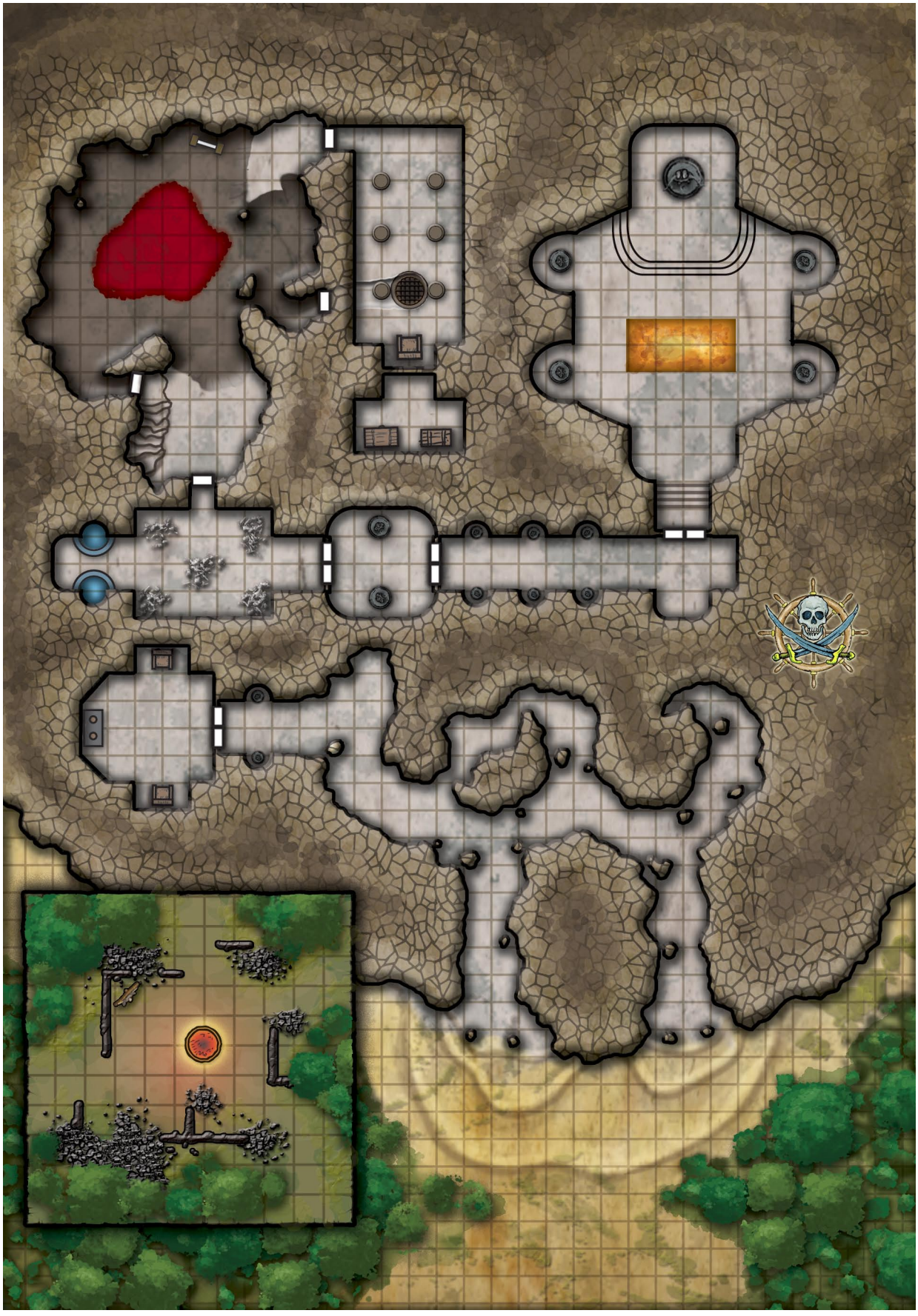

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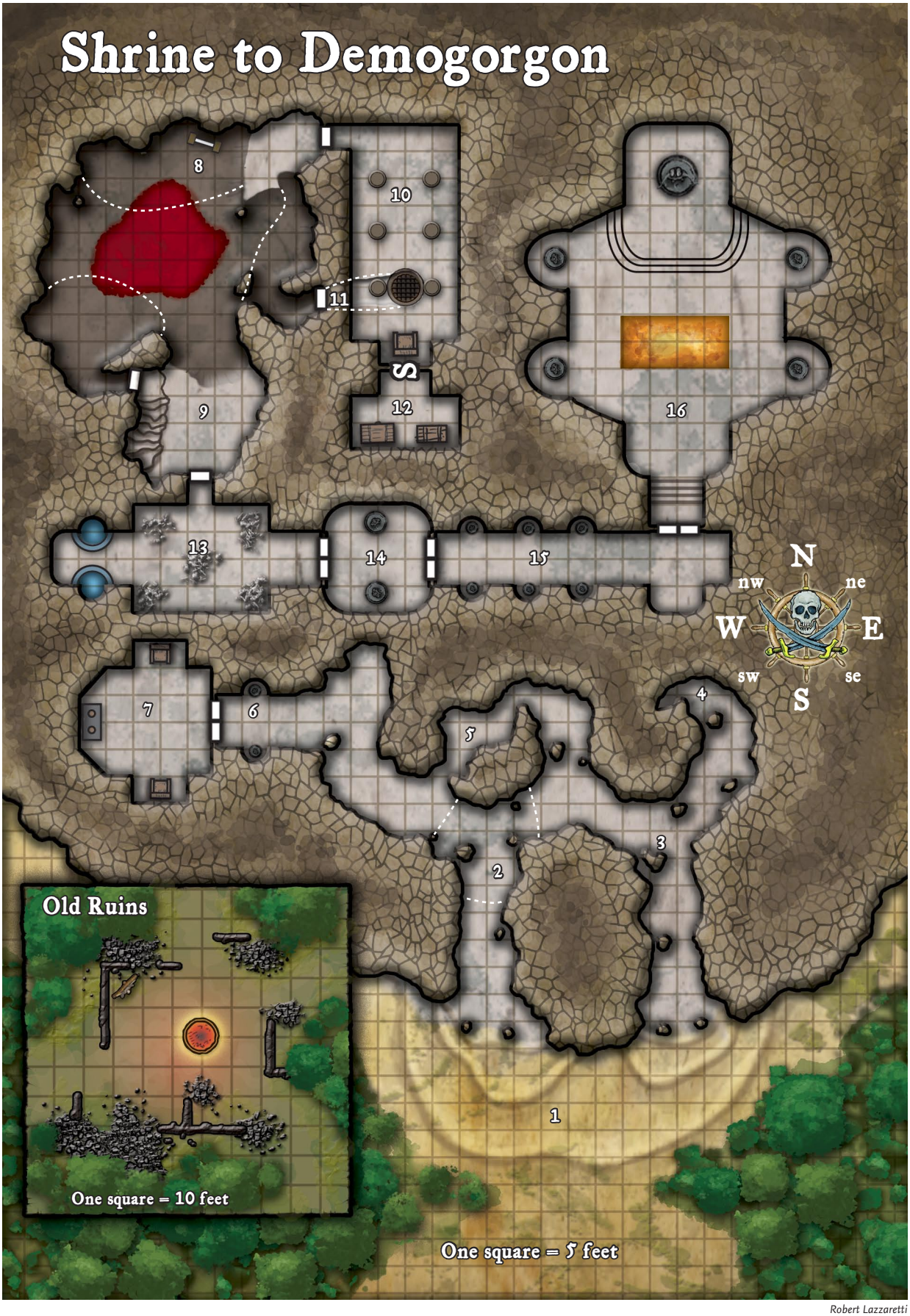

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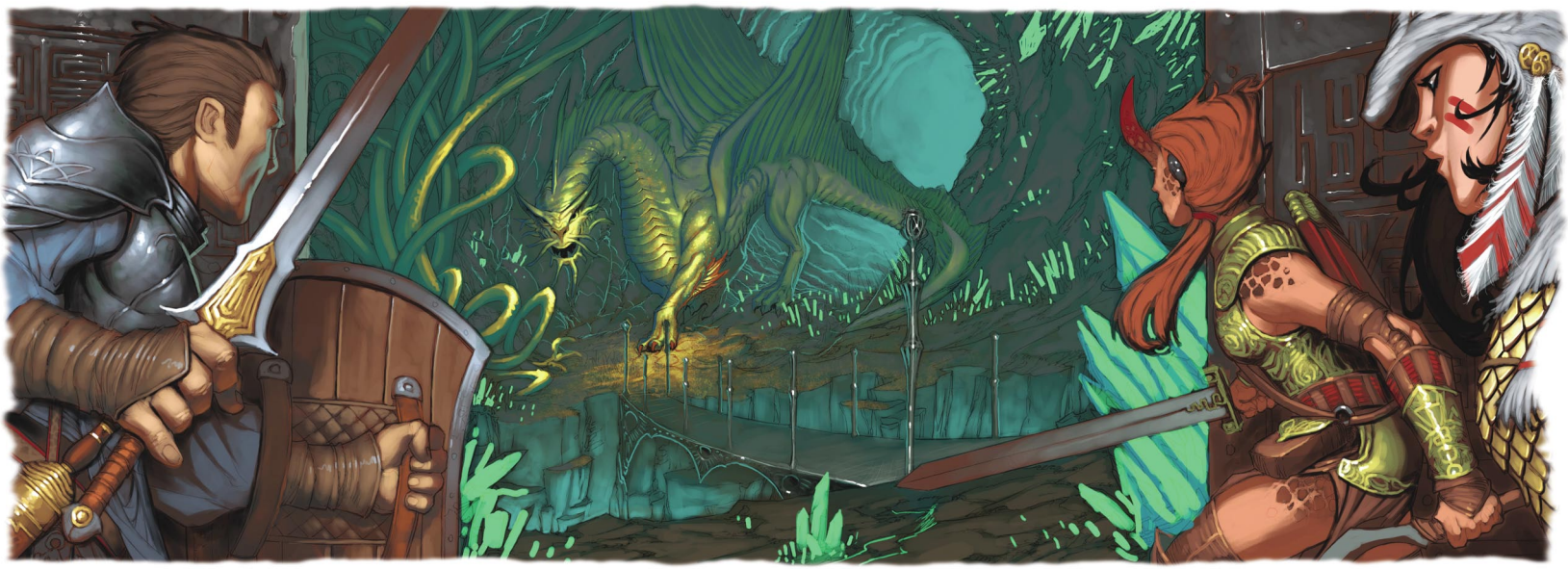

UDON

BRIGHT MOUNTAIN KING

by Caine Chandler

A nefarious druid plans to ruin a dwarven nation's economy, but first he needs a legendary weapon in an ancient dwarven tomb. When the PCs infiltrate the tomb to recover the artifact, are they playing into their enemy's hands? A D&D adventure for 16th-level characters.

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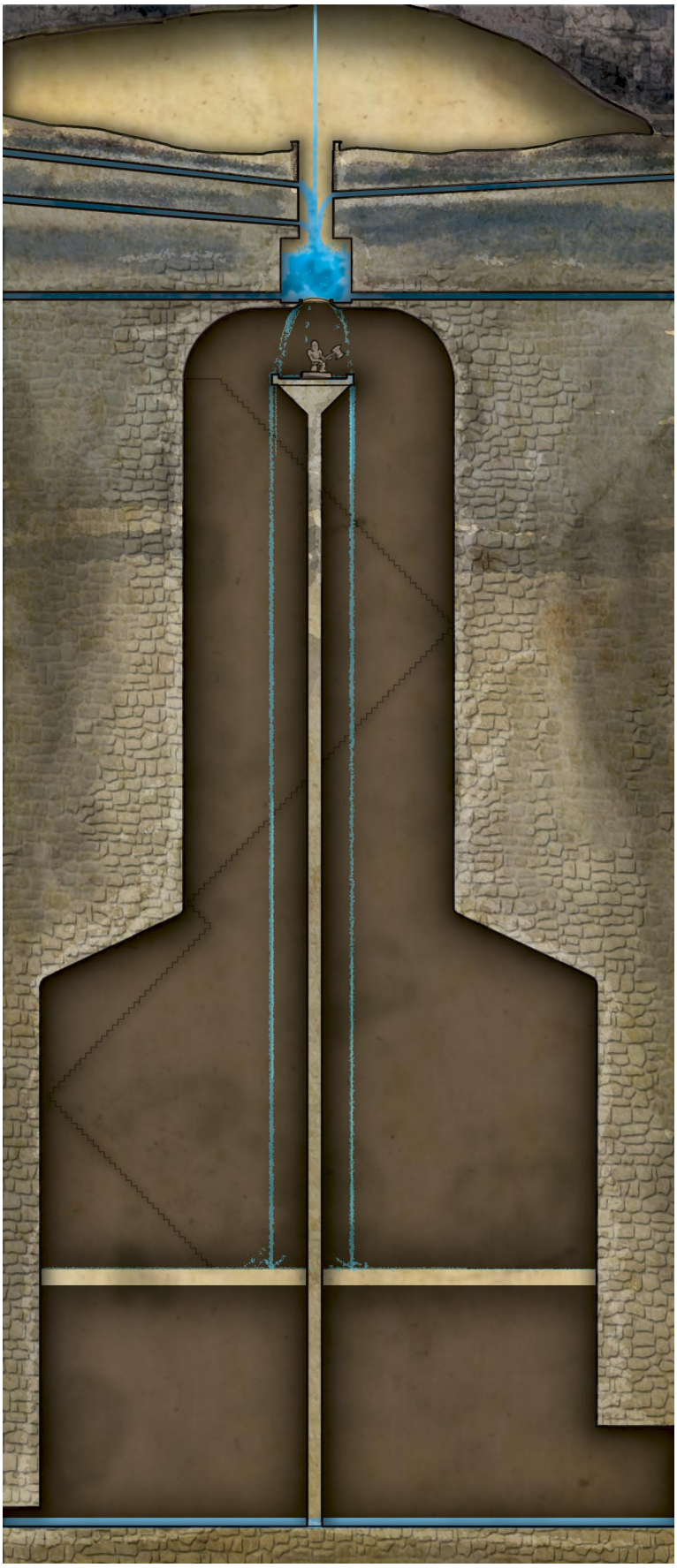

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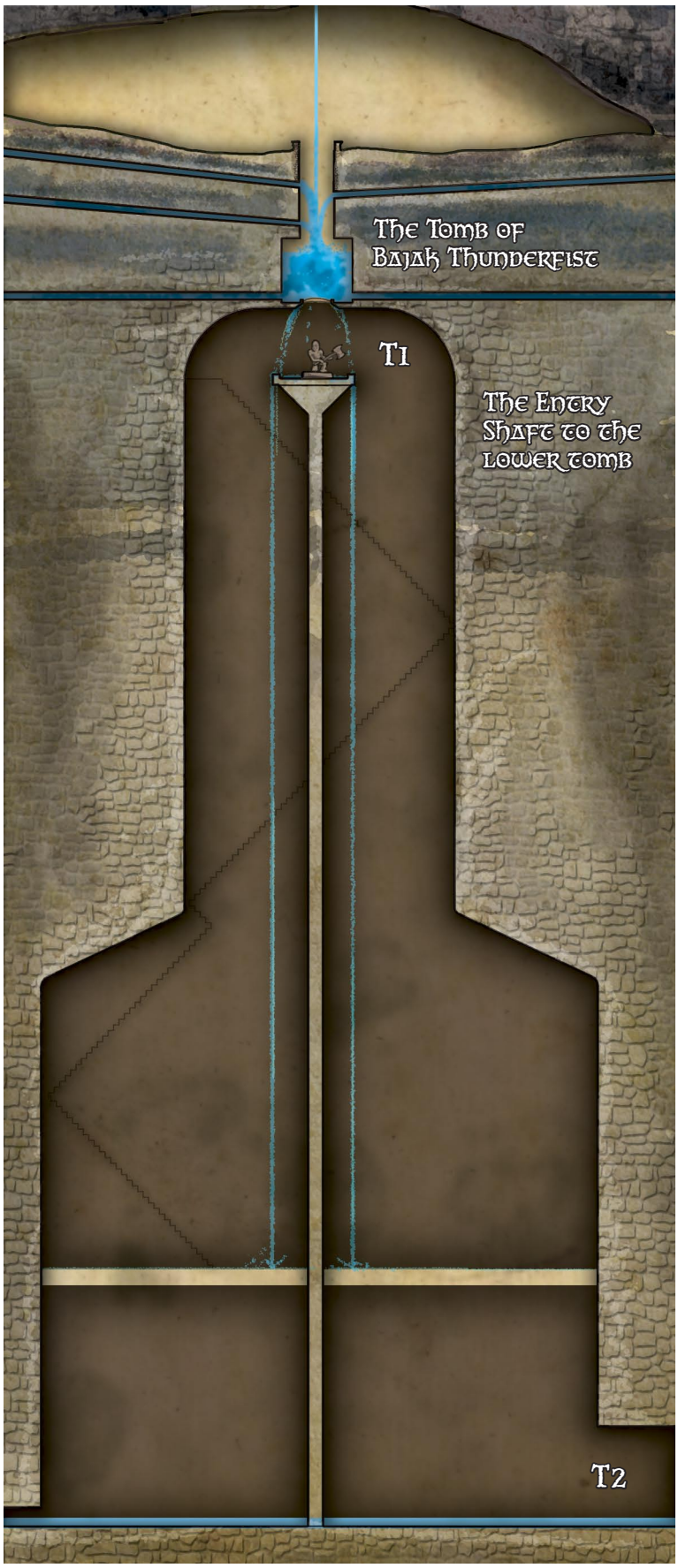

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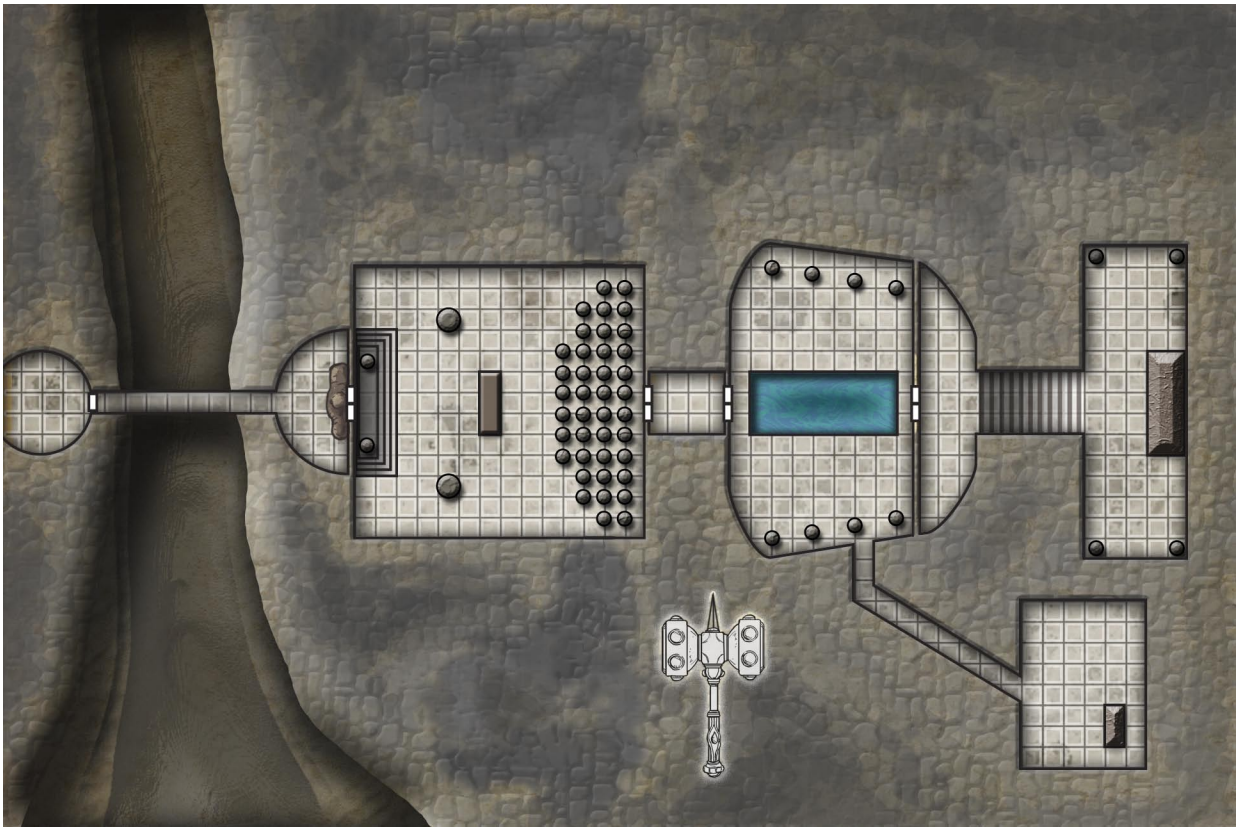

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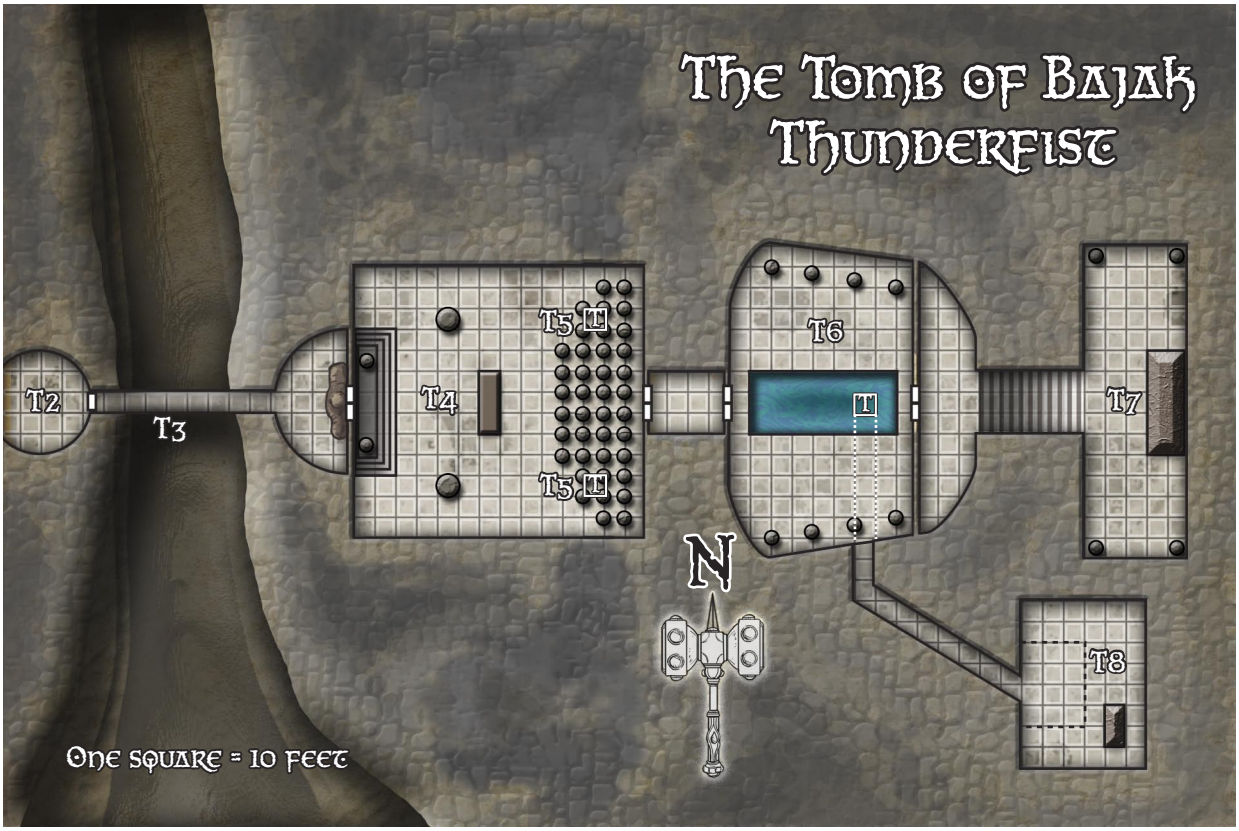

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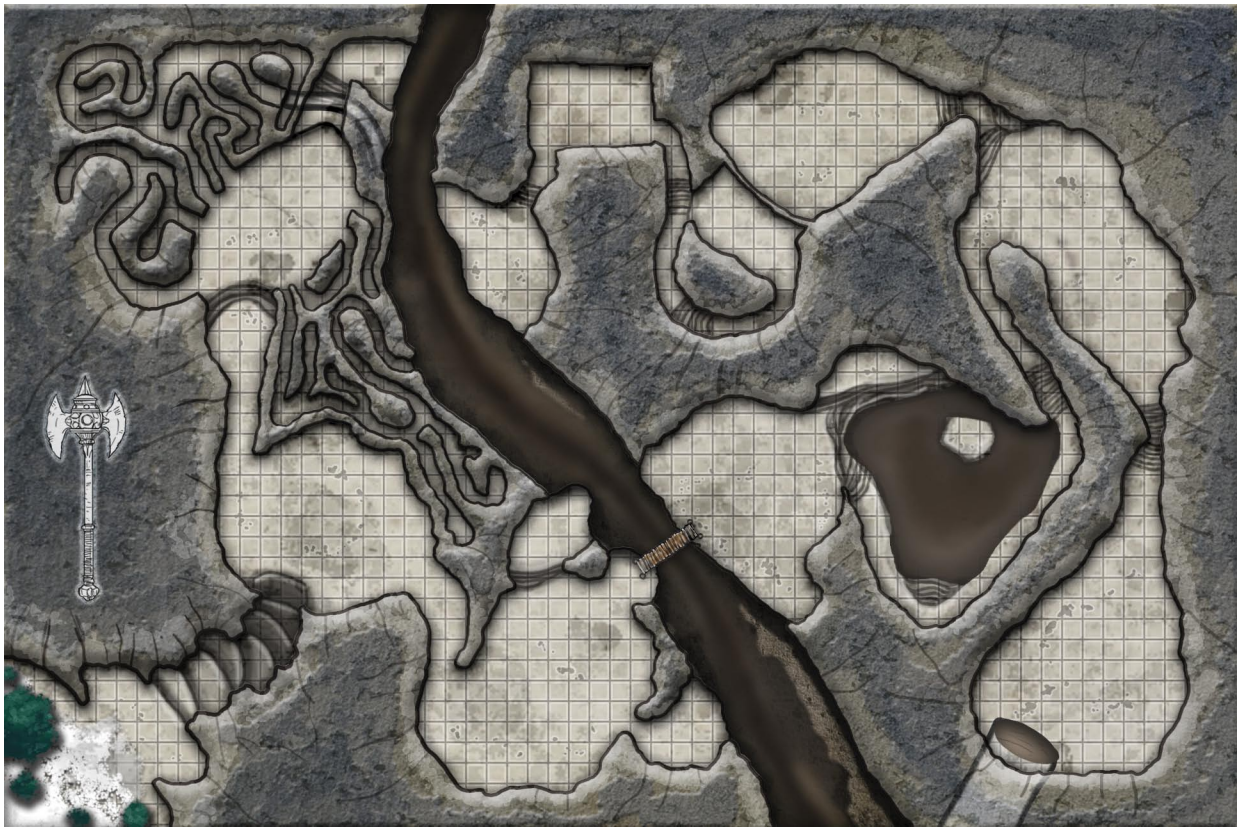

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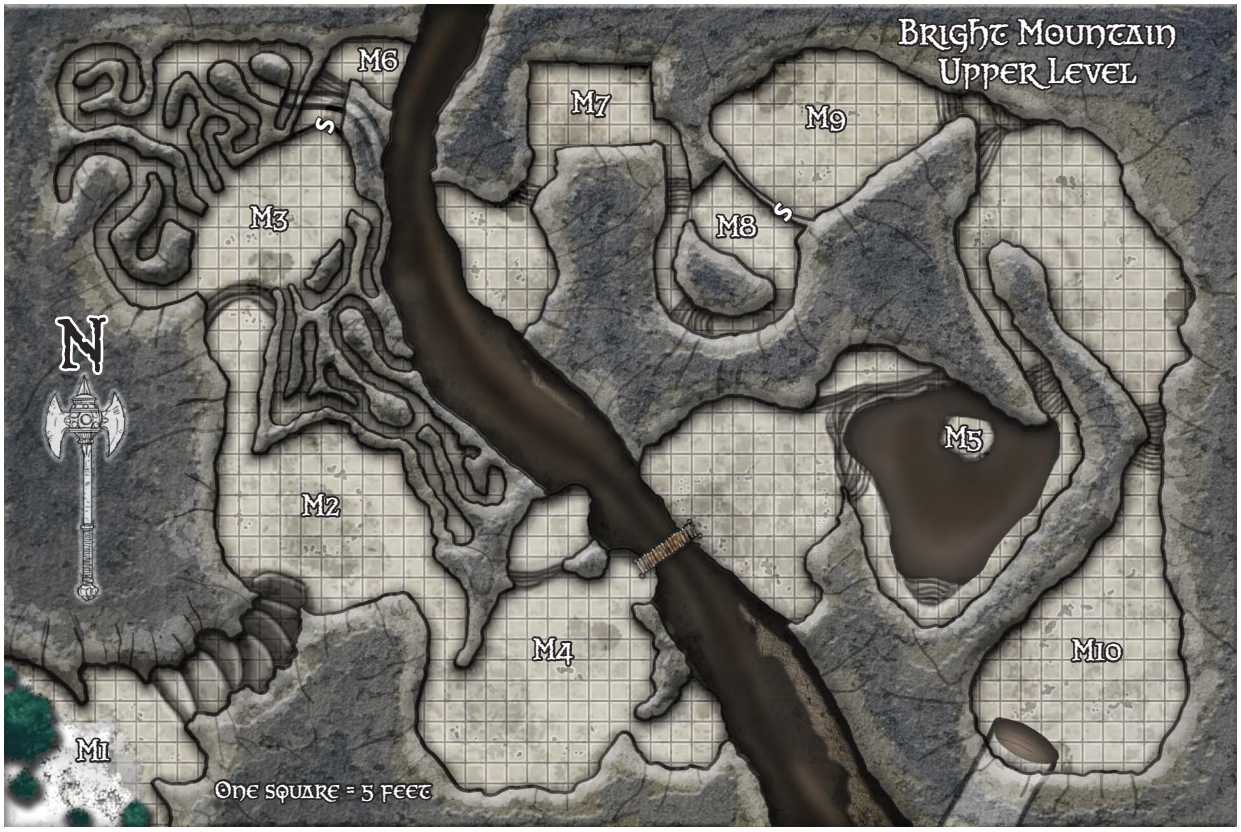

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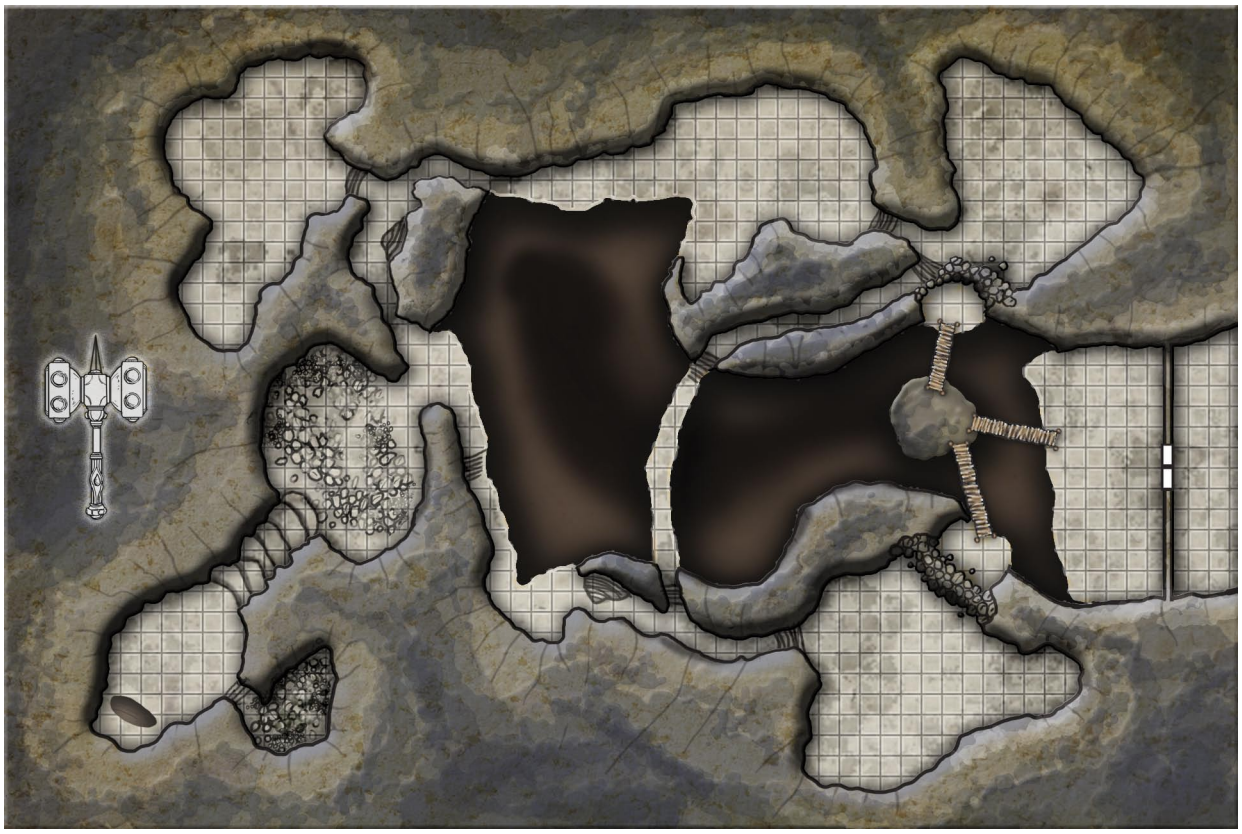

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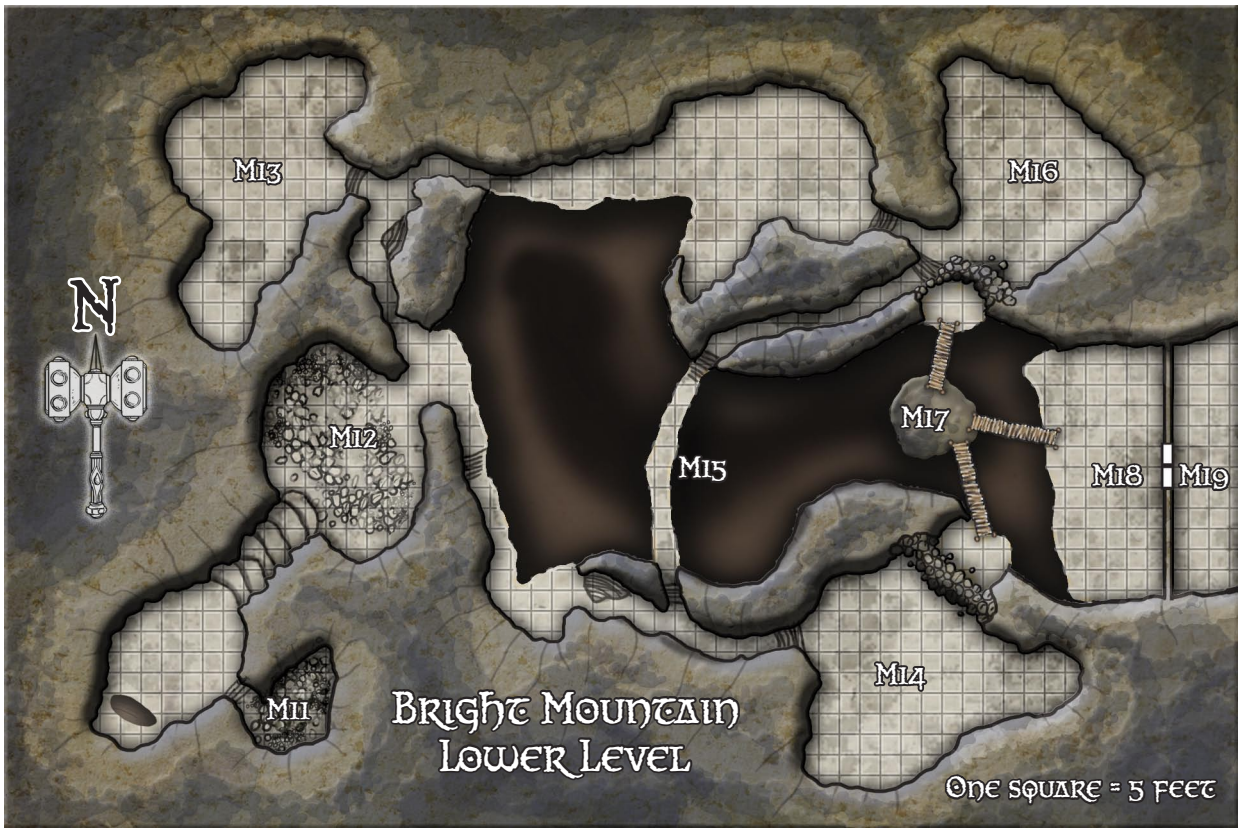

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Teverak Silversmith

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Darsam-Tor-Ews

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Carradoc and Silvedor

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Verdigris Wyrm

Warren Mahy

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